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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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AKIRA

KATSUHIRO OTOMO



**BOOK
TWO**


DARK HORSE COMICS™

translation and english-language adaptation

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and JO DUFFY**

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AKIRA BOOK TWO

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The artwork of this volume has been produced as a mirror-image of the original Japanese edition to conform to English-language standards.

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THE STORY SO FAR

Thirty-eight years after a cataclysmic explosion of unknown origin levels Tokyo and triggers World War III, the world is rebuilding from the ashes. Neo-Tokyo has risen from the rubble and is preparing for the first postwar Olympic games, a shining new stadium being erected at Ground Zero of the blast that obliterated the great city.

A group of teenage motorcycle thugs, led by Kaneda, makes an unauthorized run into the blast site where they encounter a terrified, wizened child with the number 26 tattooed on his palm and possessing of fantastic telekinetic power. Kaneda's friend Tetsuo is seriously injured during the encounter, after which the child suddenly disappears into thin air, not long before military police arrive and take Tetsuo for medical attention.

Later, Kaneda meets a beautiful and mysterious young woman named Kei, a member of an underground resistance group opposed to the goings-on in the dead zone of the old city. When Kei and her associate Ryu become entangled with Kaneda and his friends, a second encounter with Number 26 unexpectedly occurs, quickly escalating into all-out mayhem as a covert government team led by the mysterious Colonel arrives on the scene to capture the ailing Number 26, named Takashi, by utilizing the aid of another such powerful child, Masaru. Ryu and Kei fight their way to safety as Kaneda is caught in the grasp of a destructive psychic maelstrom. Kaneda manages to escape, taking with him a small capsule dropped by Takashi, intended to quell his agony.

After returning to school, where his friends wonder about the fate of Tetsuo, Kaneda becomes obsessed with Takashi's capsule, and so he has a friend at the school infirmary analyze it. The drug is unregistered but clearly top secret and incredibly potent, far too powerful for typical human consumption. Out of the blue, Tetsuo rejoins his mates, seemingly no worse for his near-death accident, although his demeanor soon becomes violent, unstable, and paranoid. Tetsuo is then taken from school by the Colonel after examination of electro-

encephalograms reveal that Tetsuo himself shows potential for developing psychokinetic abilities. At a secret facility, Tetsuo undergoes a battery of tests while another aged child psychic, Kiyoko, fortells the awakening of yet another of the brothers—Ryu—who resembles that stuns the Colonel and sends shockwaves through the corridors of power. Another jolt occurs when Tetsuo's dormant powers switch on and, steeped in growing pain, he escapes the facility, leaving a trail of destruction and death in his wake.

Kaneda goes looking for Kei and finds her and her conspirators engaged in an act of sabotage at the Olympic site. The clandestine group puts Kaneda under wraps and grills him as to the location of the capsule he earlier purloined. Kaneda denies any knowledge of the capsule, having hidden it in the gas tank of his motorcycle. The military, having discovered the group's hideout, breaks in, and Ryu, Kei, and Kaneda flee, Kei and Kaneda entering the vast sewers and tunnels beneath the city that lead into the dead zone. Chased by soldiers on high-tech, heavily armed flying platforms, Kei and Kaneda barely escape to the surface with their lives, although several of their pursuers are not so lucky.

On the streets of the city, the fevered Tetsuo is discovered by a rival bike gang, the drug-dealing Clowns, who plan to do him in until Tetsuo's growing powers dispatch his would-be killer in a grisly explosion of psychic fury. Tetsuo demands drugs to stop the pounding in his head, and the terrified bikers offer to take Tetsuo to their hangout to give him what he needs. There, the gang's angry leader, Joker, is quickly mollified by a violent demonstration of Tetsuo's power. Tetsuo takes enough drugs to kill a normal human many times over; the only consequence being a momentary dulling of his headache. The Clowns crown the apparently superhuman Tetsuo as their new leader.

Meanwhile, deep beneath ground zero is a hidden, ultra-security complex, the Colonel arrives to check the conditions of a near-absolute-zero static chamber designed to hold prisoner a special occupant—the entity known only as Akira, the power responsible for the destruction of Tokyo and World War III. Despite Kiyoko's portentous visions, everything is as it should be...for the time being.

The Tetsuo-led Clowns, emboldened by the awesome power of their new chief, begin a violent rampage against rival bikers. Informed of Tetsuo's treachery and the strange powers he now exhibits, Kaneda hastily arranges a meeting of the other rival gangs, who decide to band together to take on Tetsuo and the Clowns. Elsewhere, Ryu meets with Nezu, the leader of the underground, who has uncovered evidence that suggests the government has been for many years creating a unit of paranormal humans.

After a wild motorcycle battle with the Clowns, a contingent of bikers led by Kaneda's friend Yamagata corners Tetsuo in a warehouse. Tetsuo, growing more powerful and more agonized by the minute, easily thwarts his attackers. Kaneda has the opportunity to shoot the paranormal madman, but the long association with his boyhood friend prevents him from pulling the trigger. Yamagata tries to do the job himself, but Tetsuo kills him horribly. Kaneda hesitates no longer and shoots Tetsuo, who in a wounded rage unleashes a burst of telekinetic destruction. Kaneda barely avoiding being crushed by falling debris, The Colonel and his forces arrive to find the wounded, pain-agonized Tetsuo screaming for drugs. Kaneda attacks him again, and in the struggle the capsule drops from his pocket. Tetsuo grabs the pill and prepares to take it, even as the Colonel warns him that the drug will kill him.

Tetsuo swallows the pill and almost immediately goes into a massive seizure and collapses, apparently dead. The Colonel has Kaneda taken prisoner but is interrupted by "Number 26" rises. Kaneda breaks away from his captors in an attempt to again attack his former friend, but a tidal wave of psychokinetic force sends Kaneda running for his life. Kei arrives in the nick of time to help Kaneda, but Tetsuo's power prevents their escape. The effects of the super-drug have eliminated Tetsuo's pain, and he prepares to kill Kaneda and Kei when he is suddenly confronted by the Colonel, who tells Tetsuo that he can be helped, both with the drug that takes away his pain and with training to help him utilize his power to its fullest capability. Tetsuo realizes he has few alternatives when the pain returns, and so he becomes the latest addition to the Colonel's paranormal menagerie—Number 41.



AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

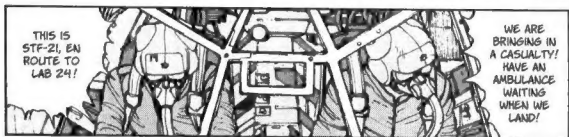
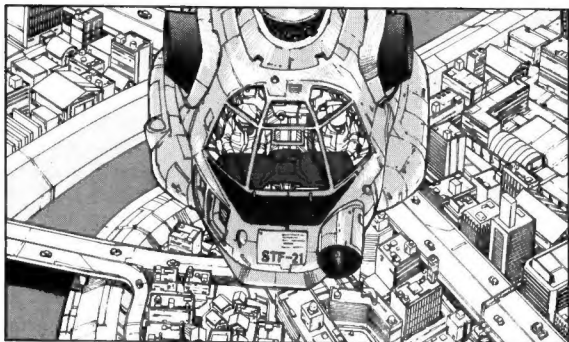


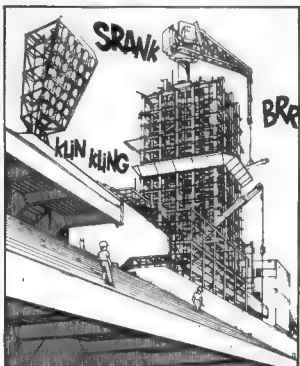
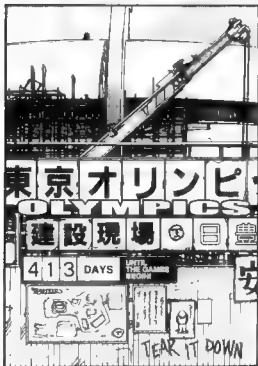
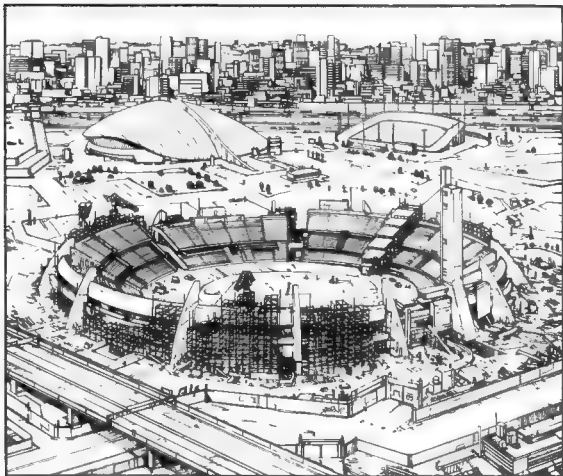


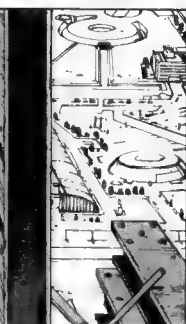
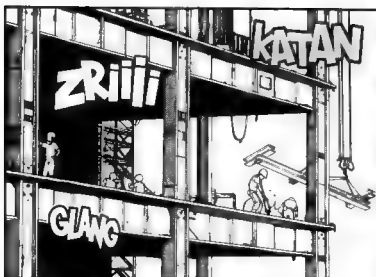


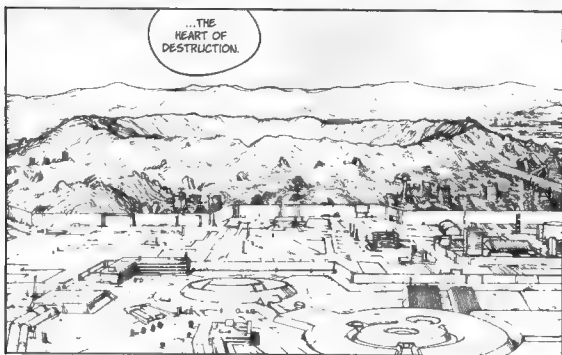
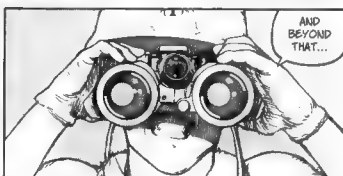
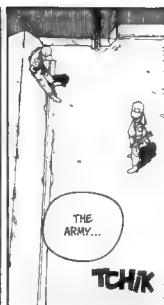
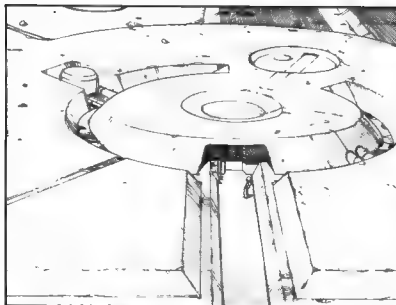


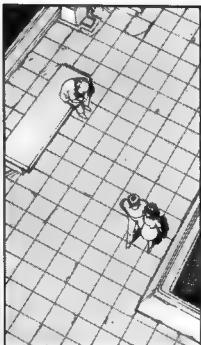
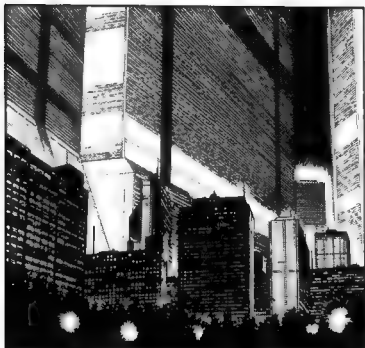


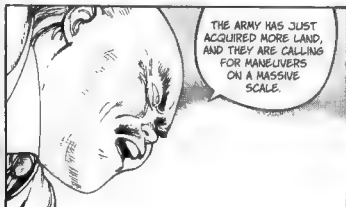
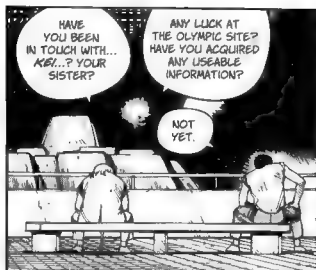


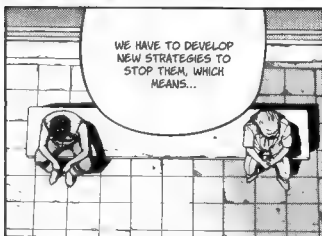
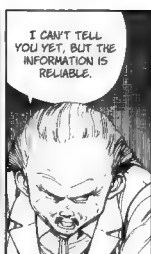


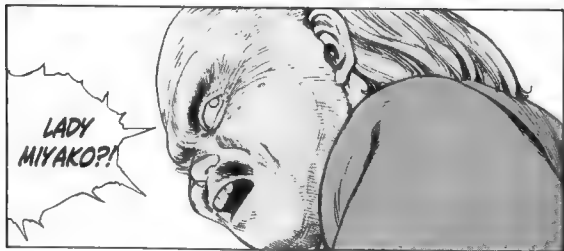
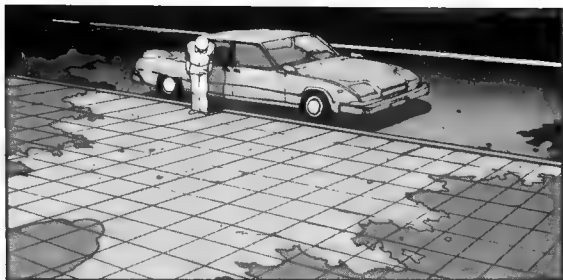


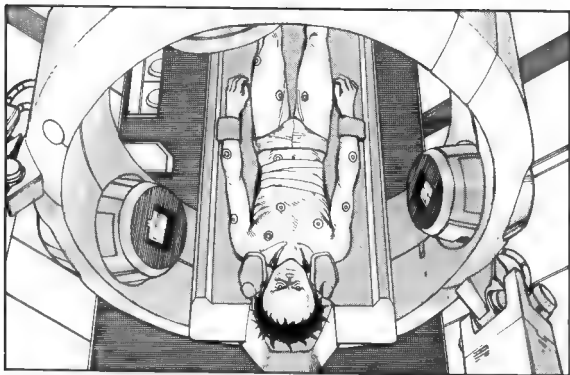




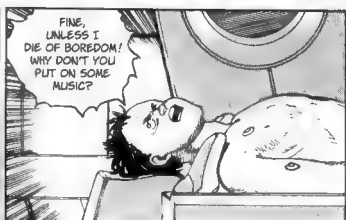








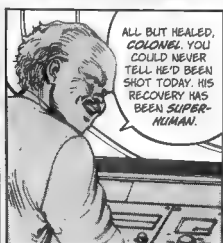
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ARE YOU
FEELING,
TETSUO?



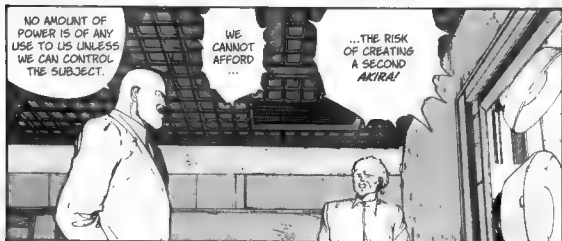
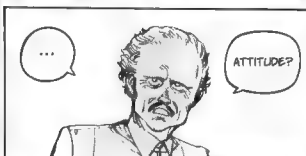
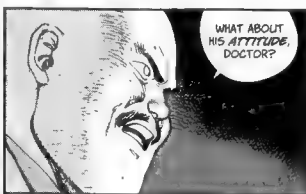
FINE,
UNLESS I
DIE OF BOREDOM!
WHY DON'T YOU
PUT ON SOME
MUSIC?

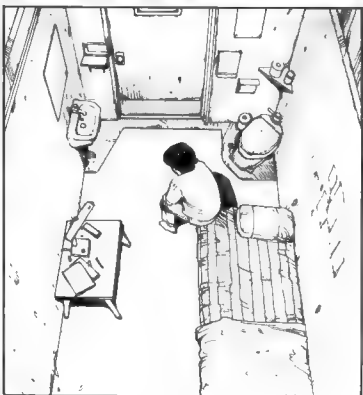
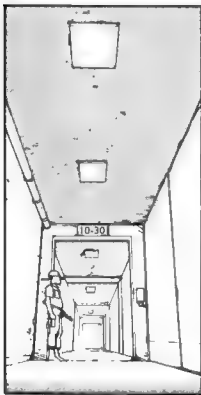
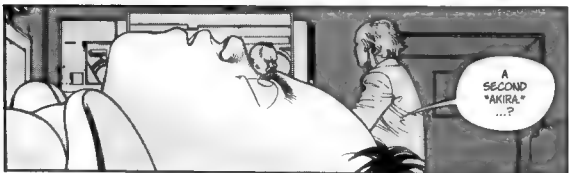
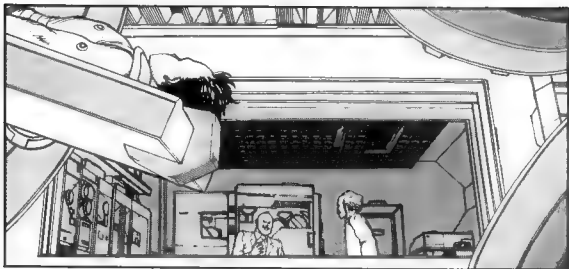


HIS
INJURIES,
DOCTOR?

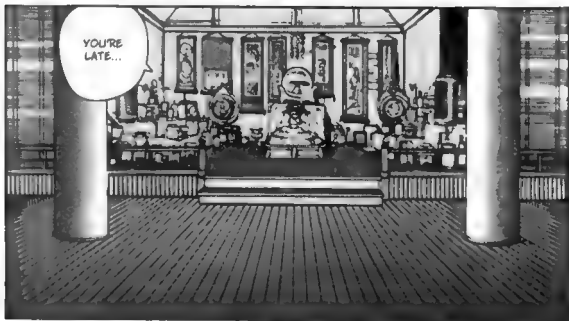
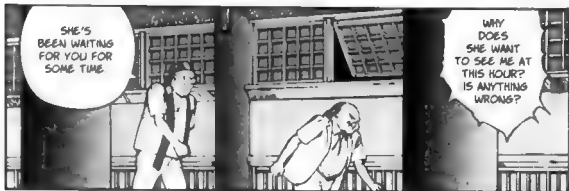


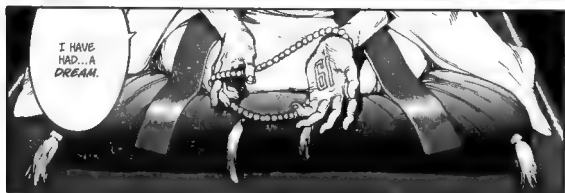
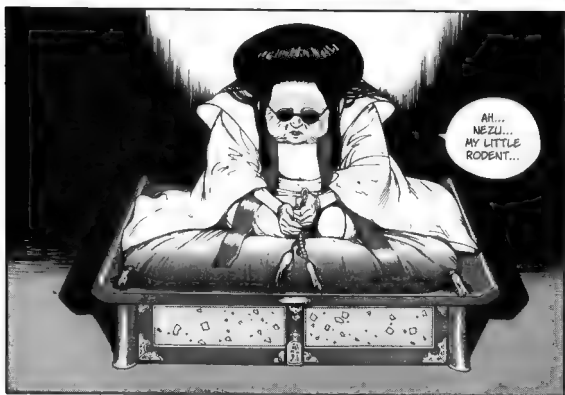
ALL BUT HEALED,
COLONEL. YOU
COULD NEVER
TELL HE'D BEEN
SHOT TODAY. HIS
RECOVERY HAS
BEEN **SUPER-
HUMAN.**



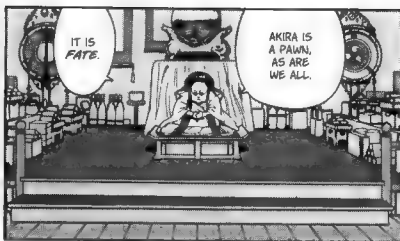


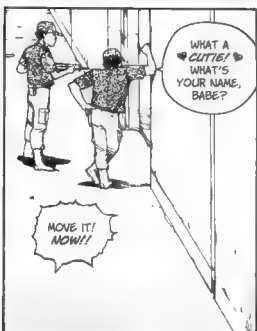
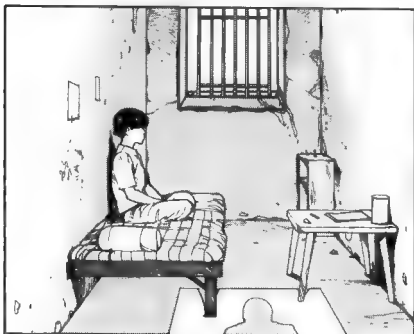
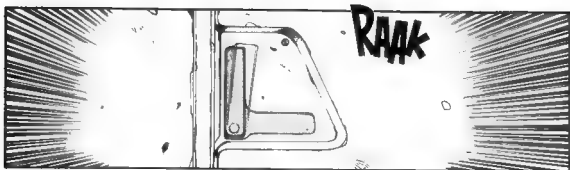


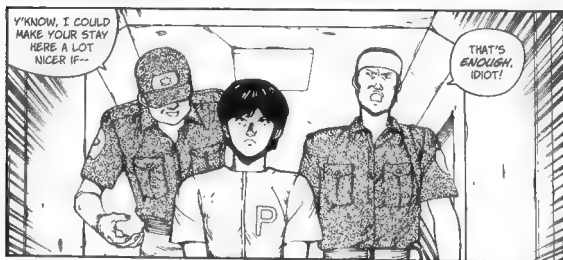


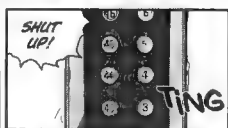
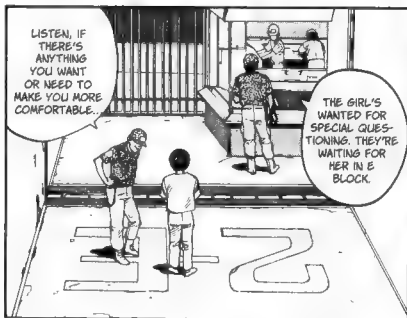








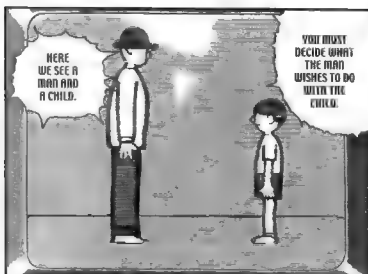


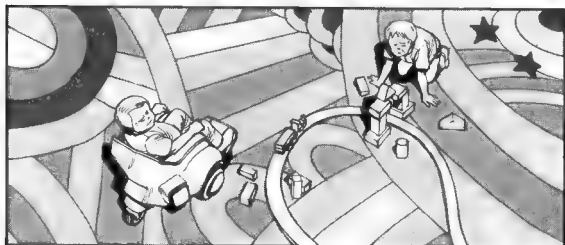
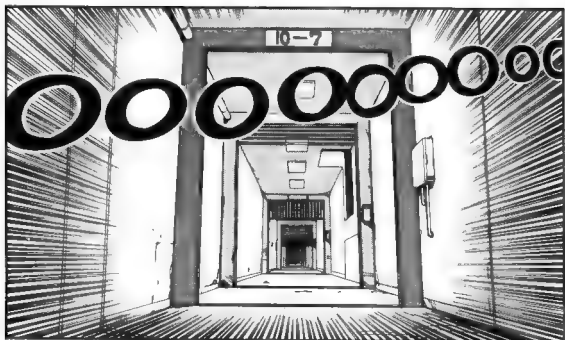




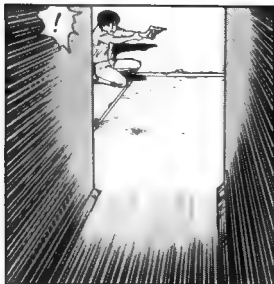


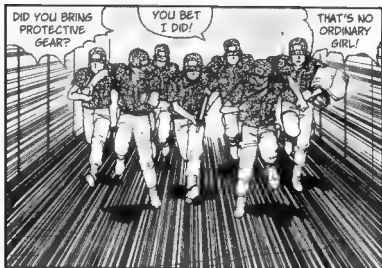


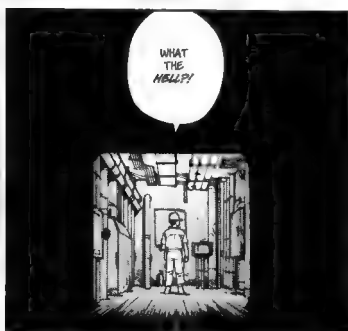
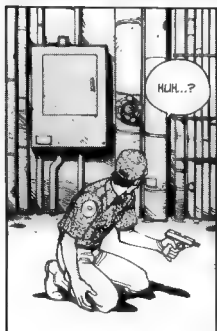
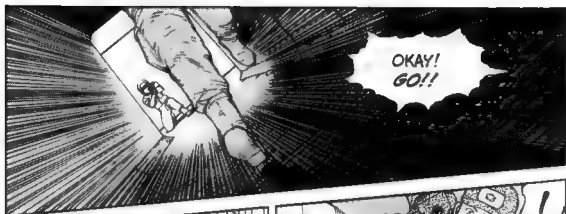


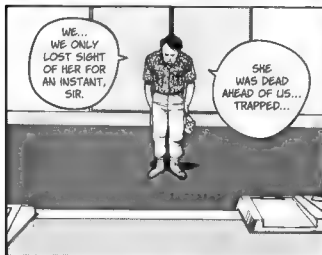




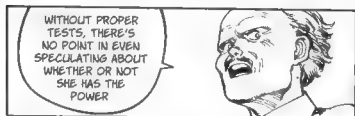












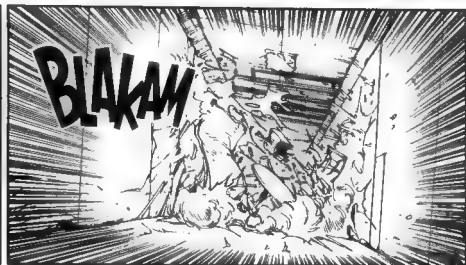
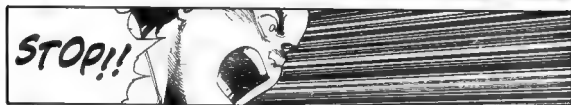
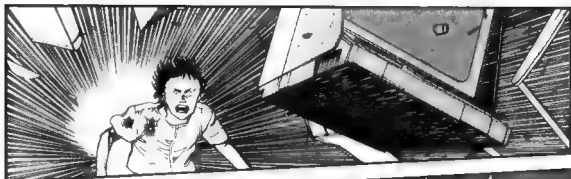


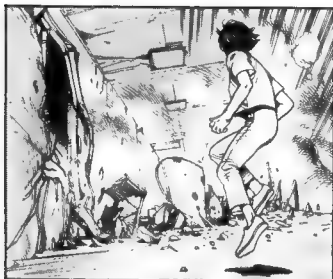


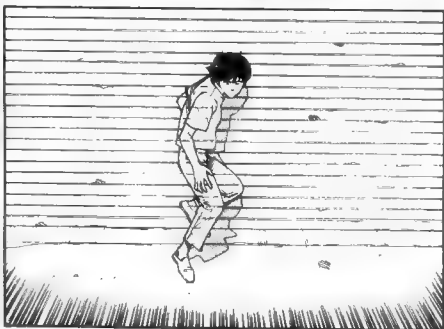
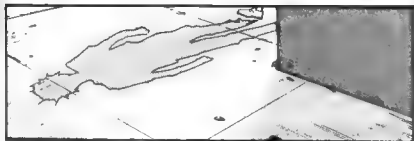
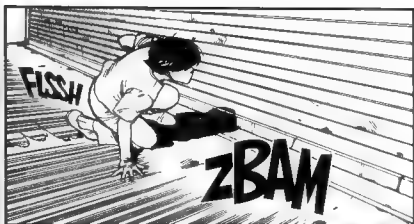
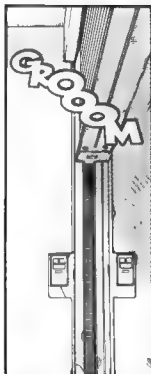


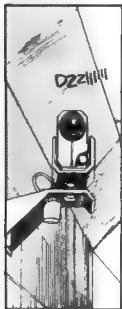
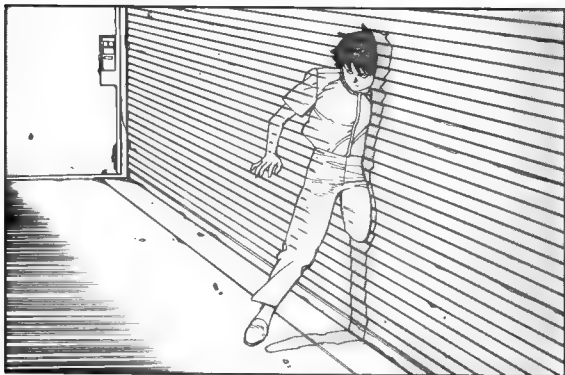


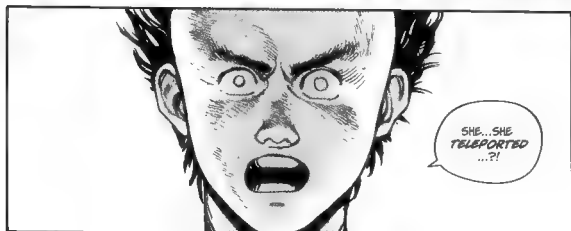


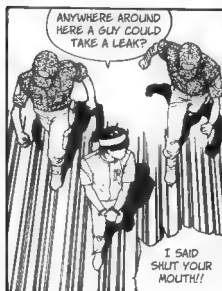
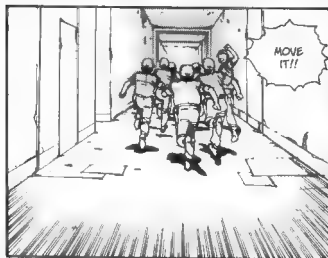
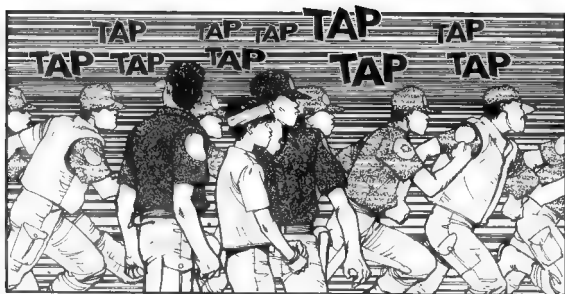


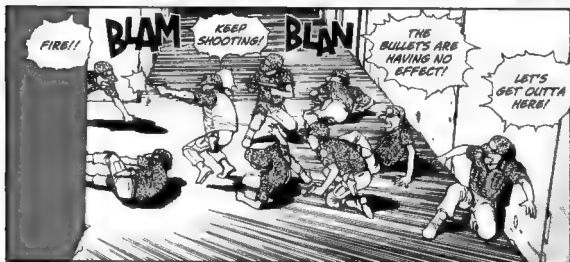
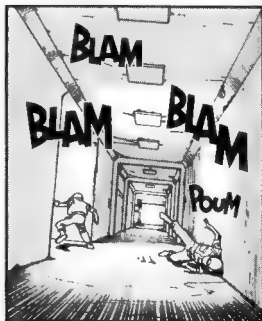




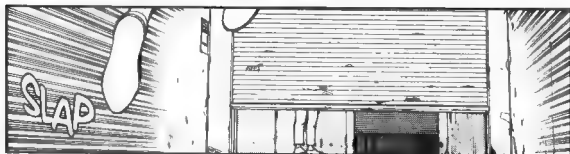




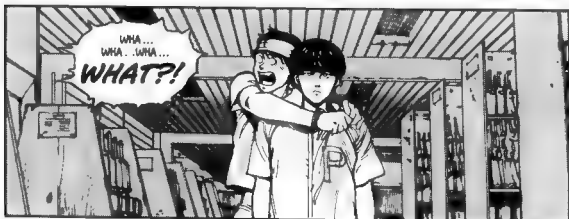


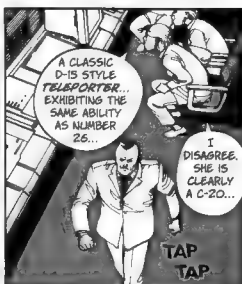
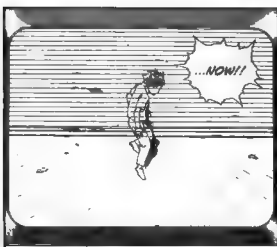


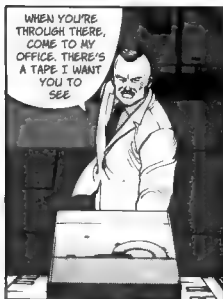
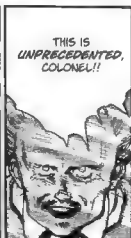
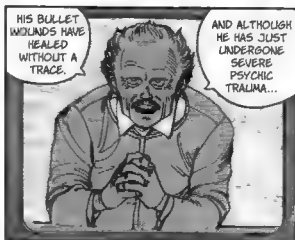
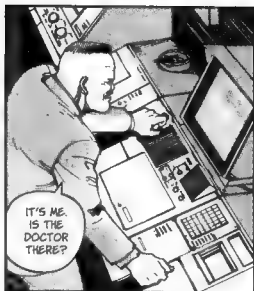


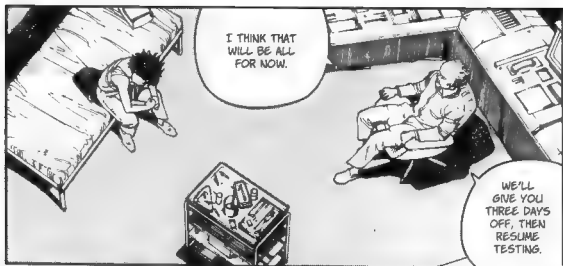


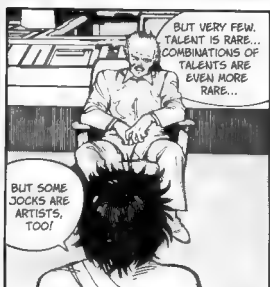


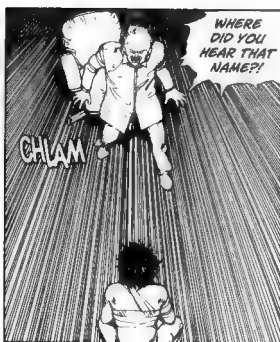








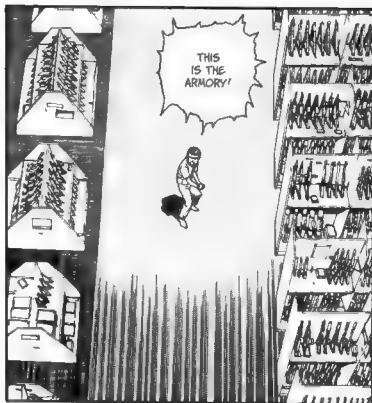


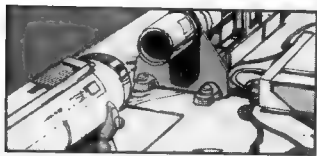
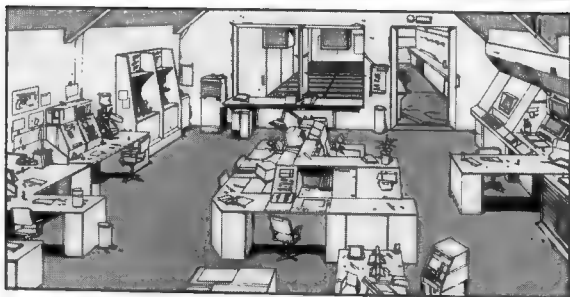


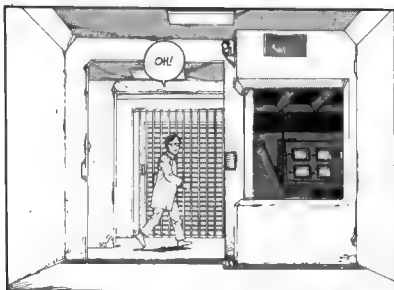
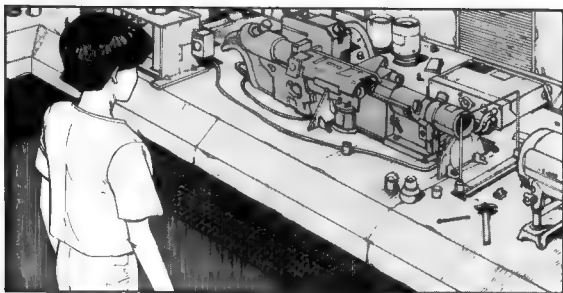


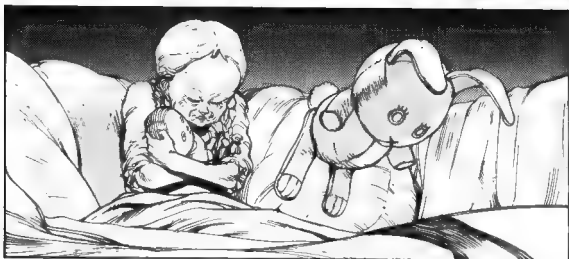
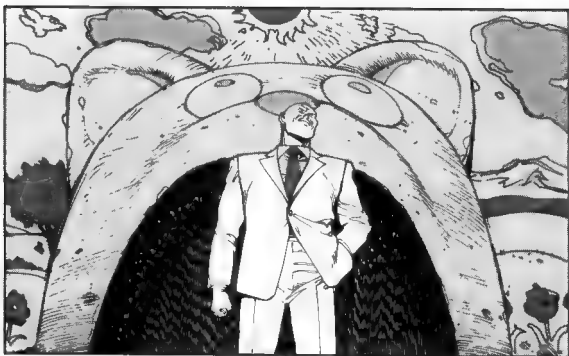


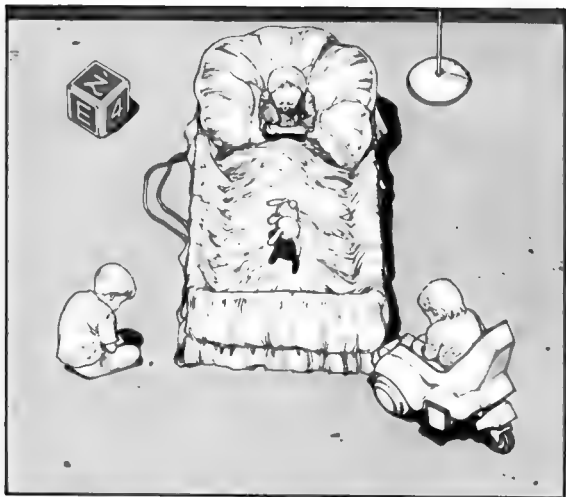


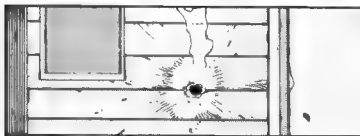
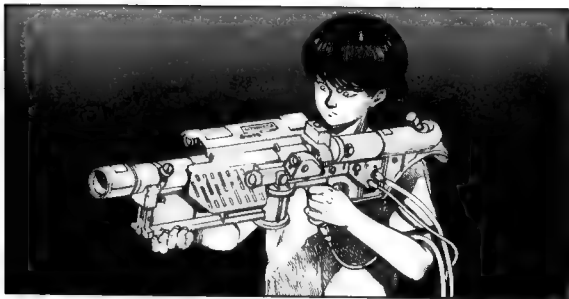


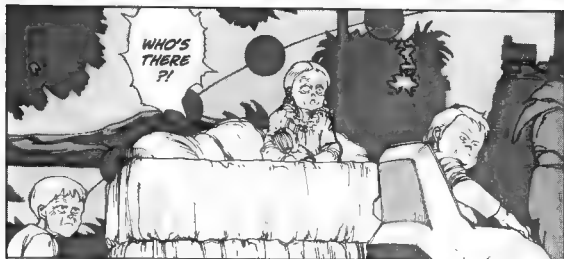




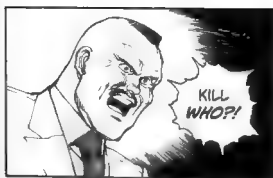
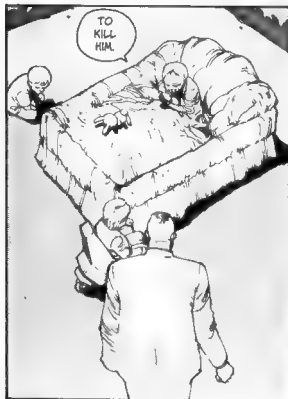


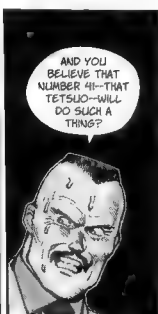
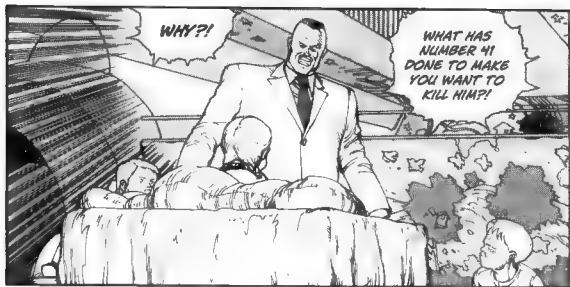














NO...
BUT AKIRA
WILL



AKIRA!

WHY WOULD AKIRA
DESTROY ANYTHING?
AND WHAT HAS
NUMBER 41
TO DO
WITH IT?



THAT'S
WHY WE
HAVE TO KILL
TETSUO.



I'M DOWN
WITH THAT!
WHERE IS
HE?!



THAT'S
WHY WE
HAVE TO KILL
TETSUO.



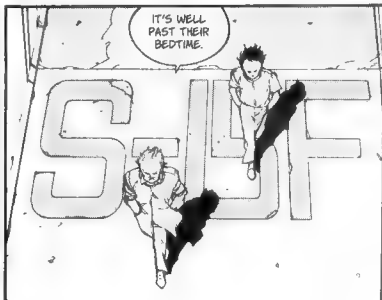
HOWEVER...



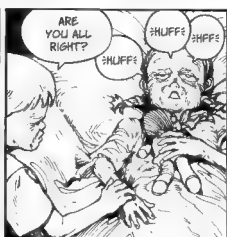
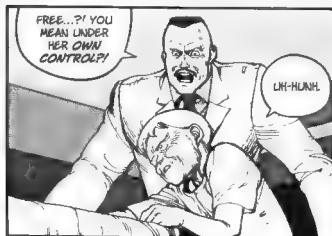
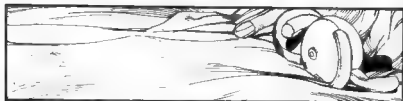
...IT'S
MORE THAN WE
CAN ACCOMPLISH
ALONE, THAT'S
WHY...

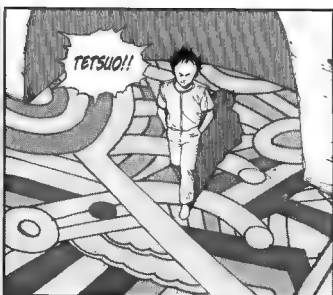
YOU
USED THAT
GIRL! WHERE
IS SHE
NOW?!



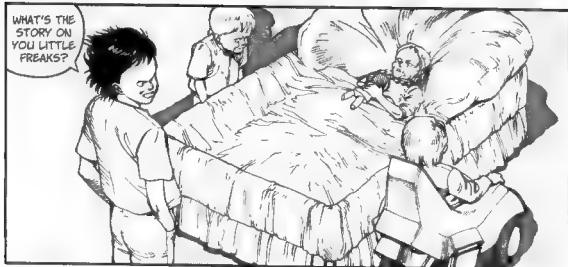


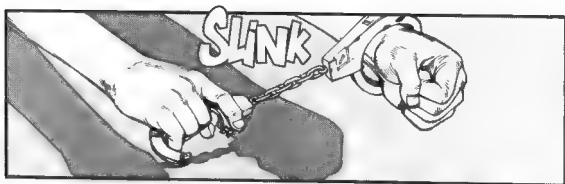




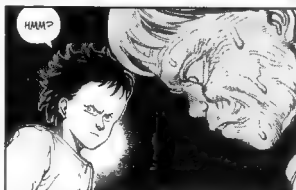


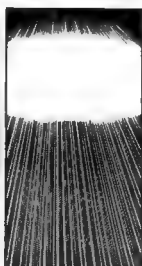
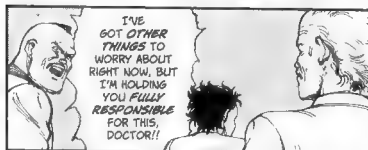


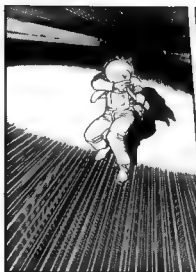


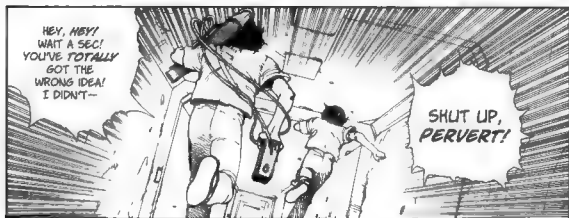
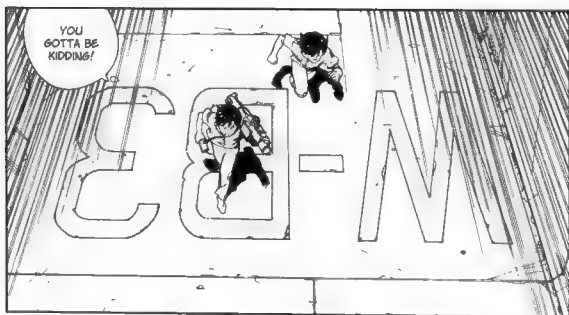




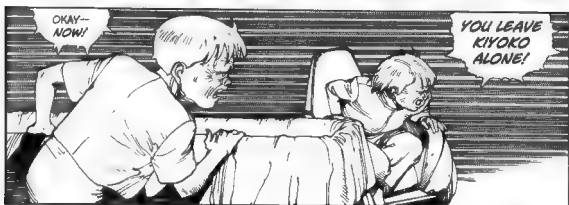










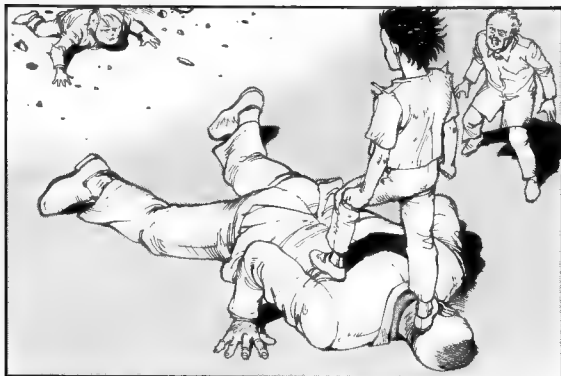
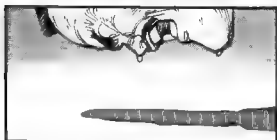


YOU LEAVE
KIYOKO
ALONE!

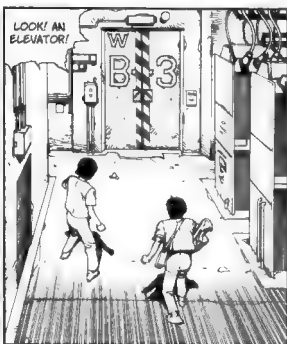
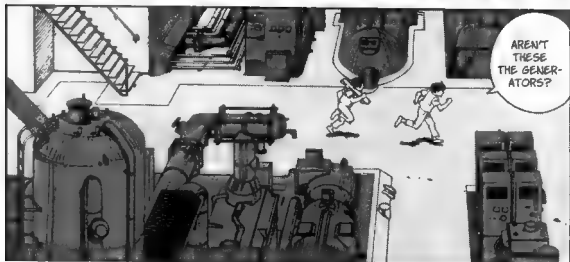


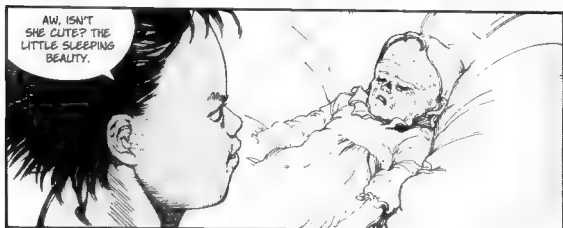


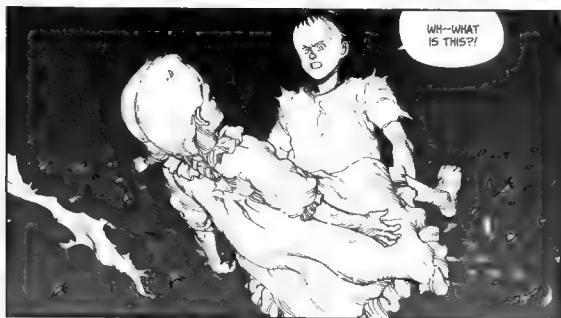


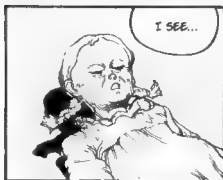




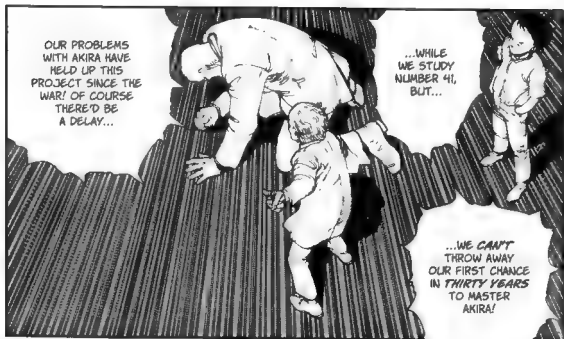


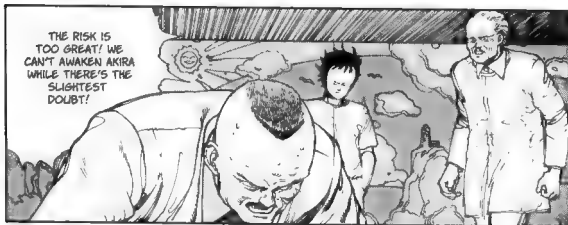
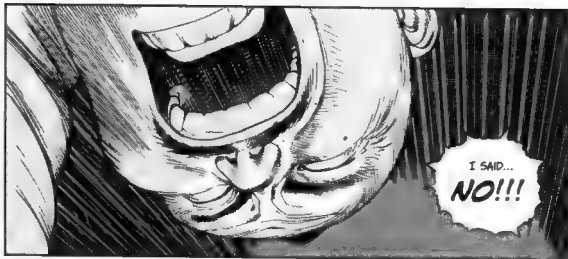




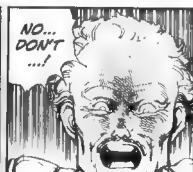
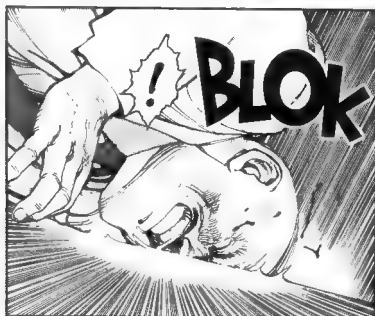


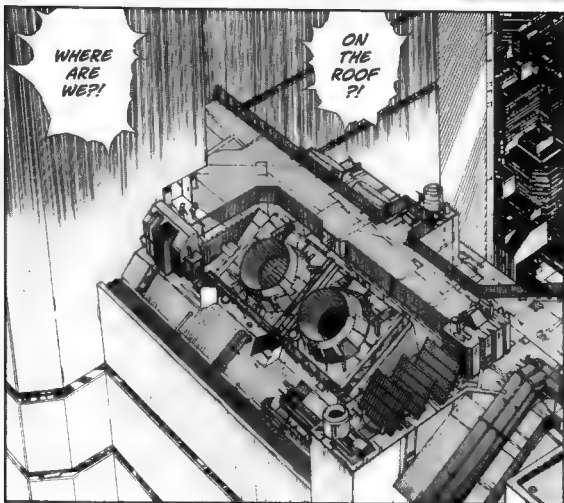


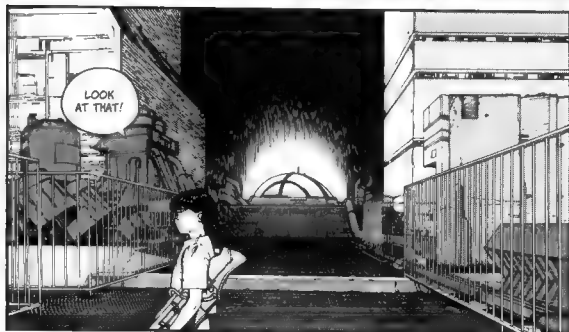


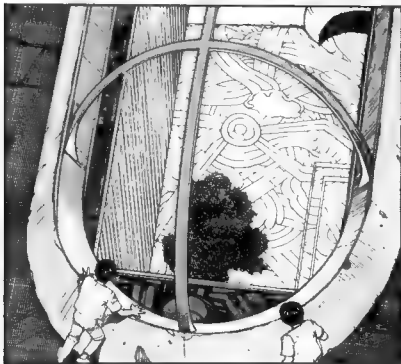
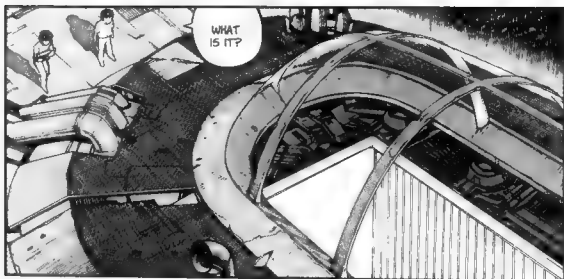




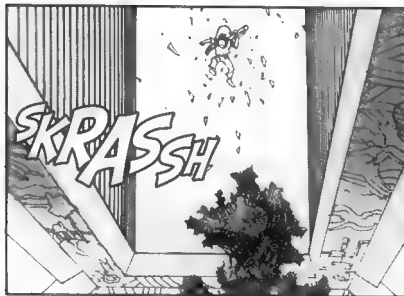
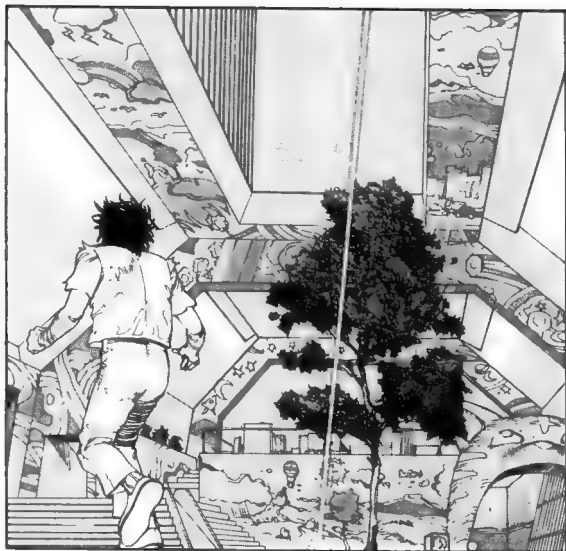




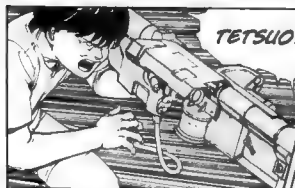


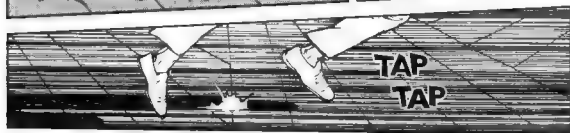


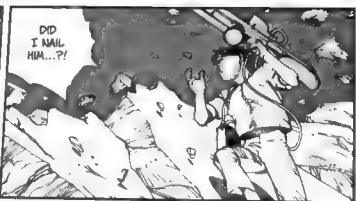




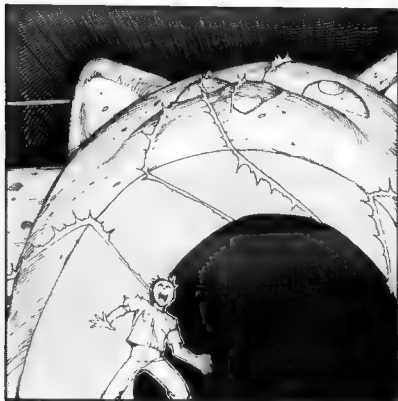




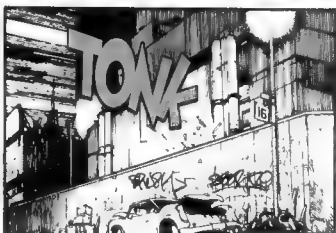


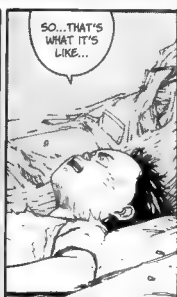




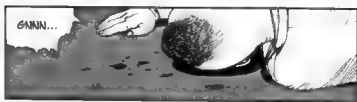
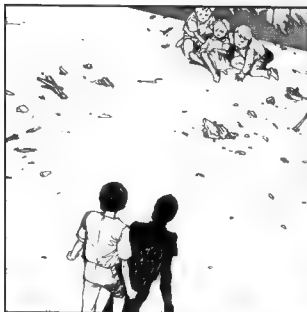




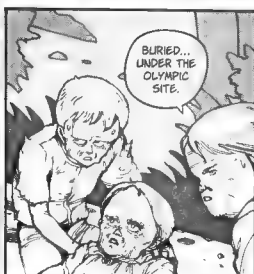




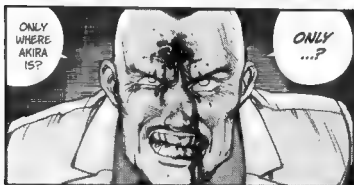
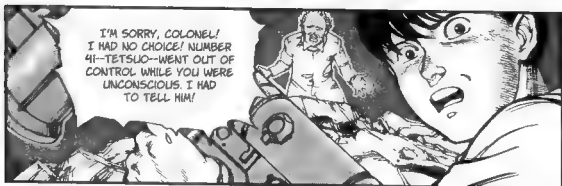


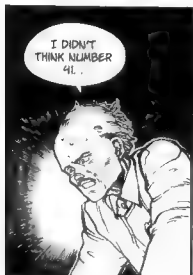
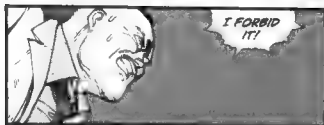


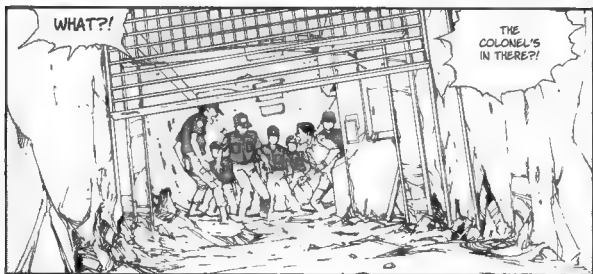
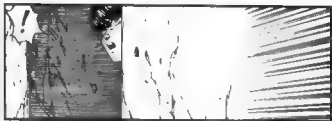


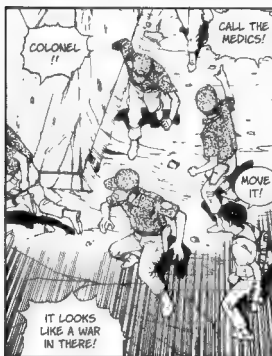




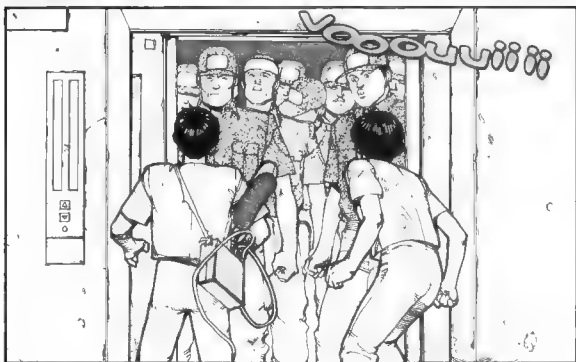
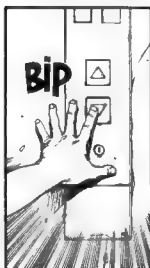


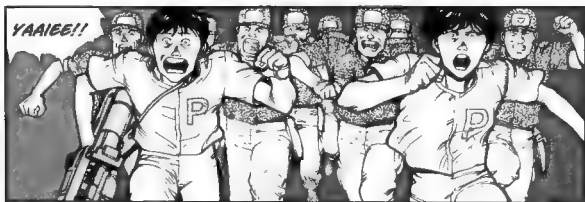


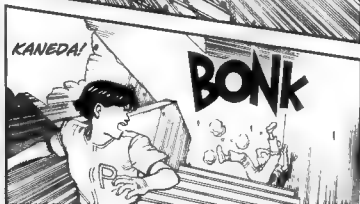


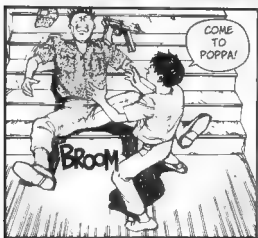
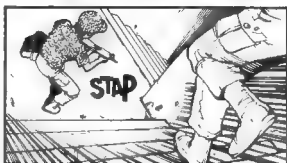


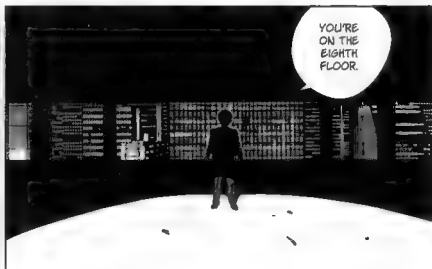
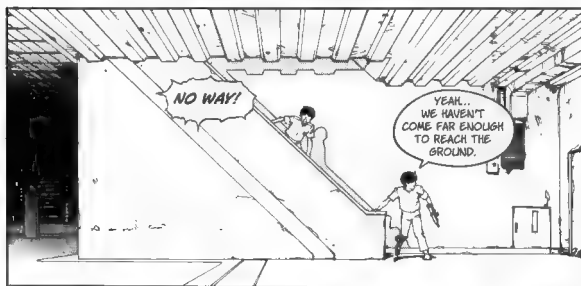
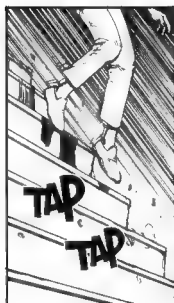






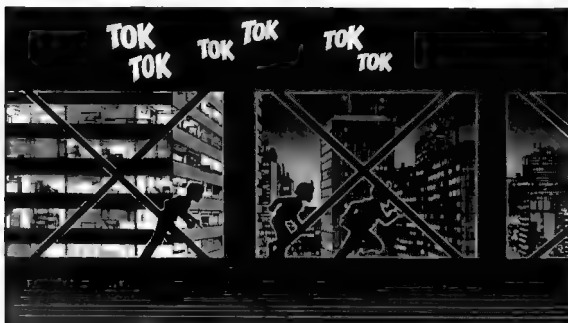


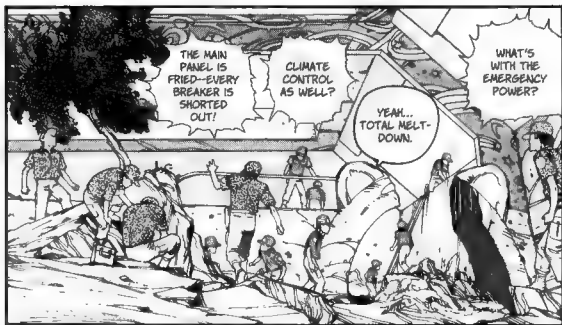


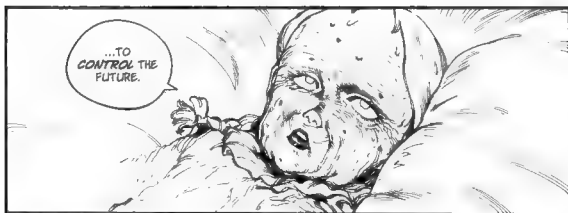


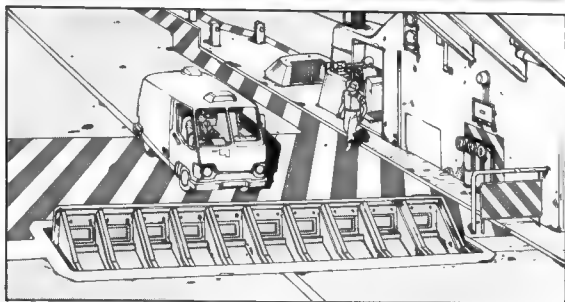
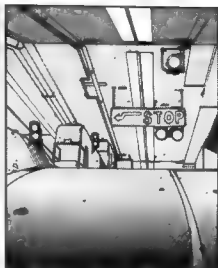
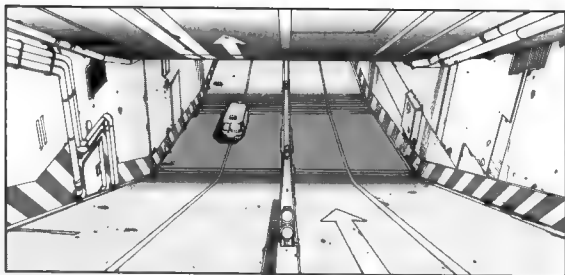


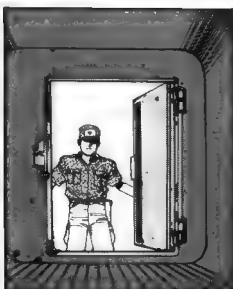
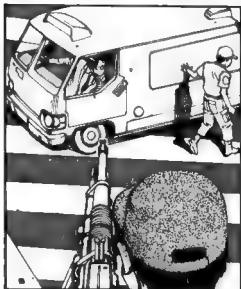


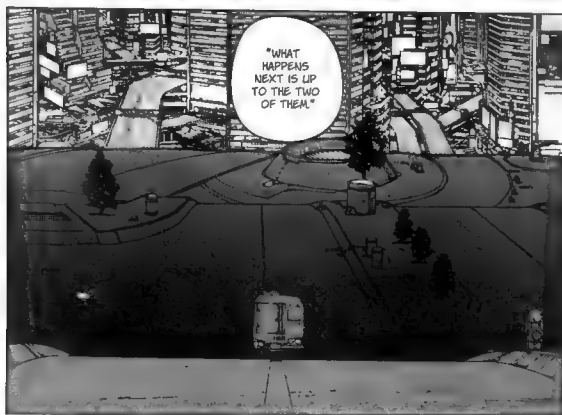
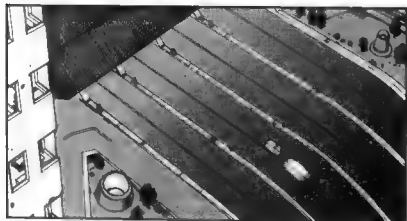


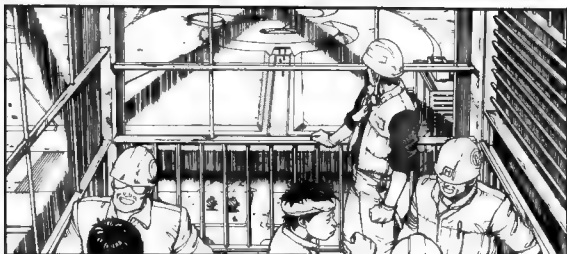
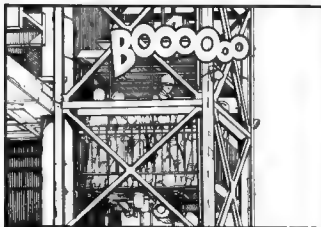


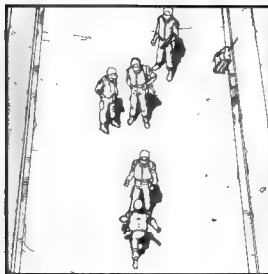
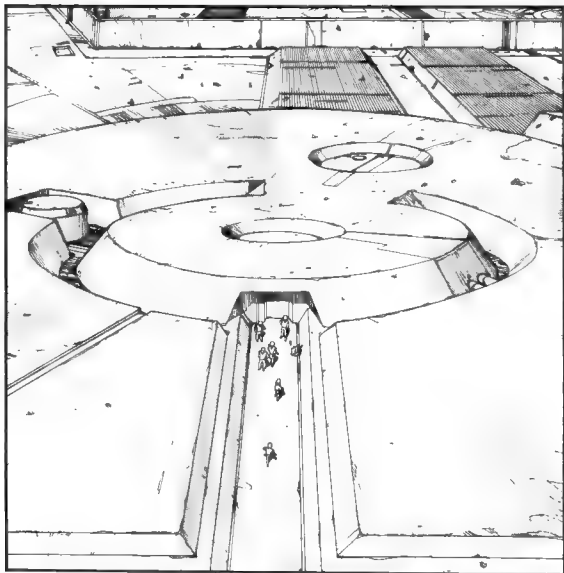


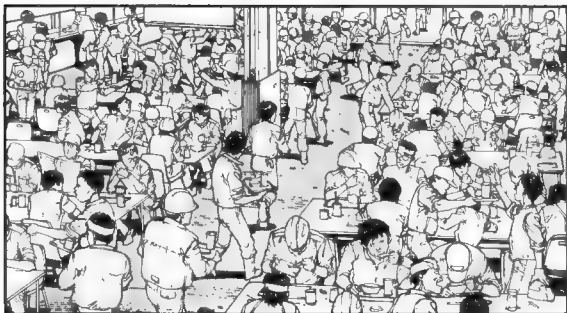


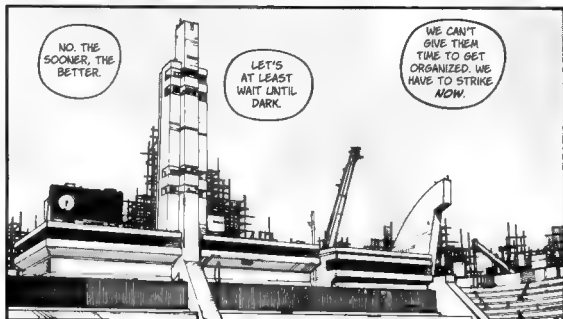


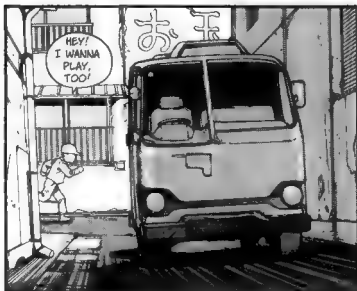








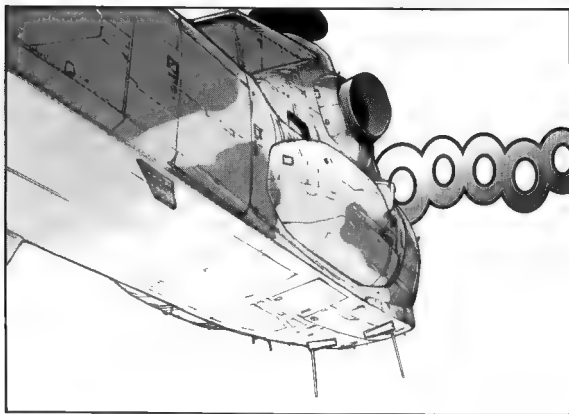


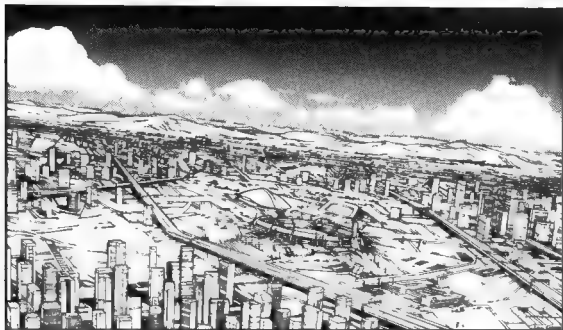


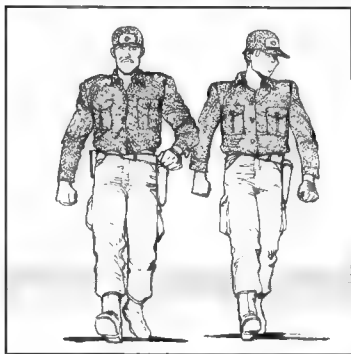
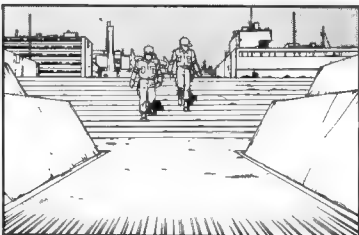
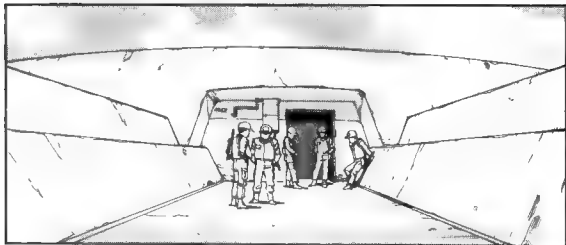


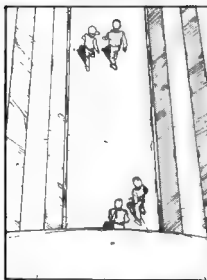


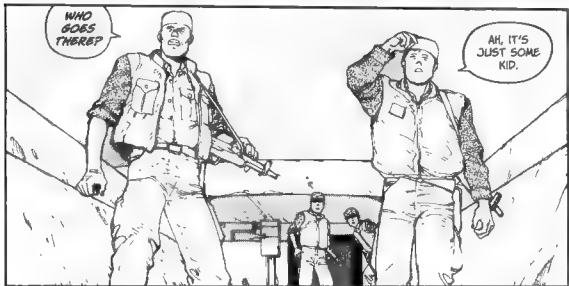
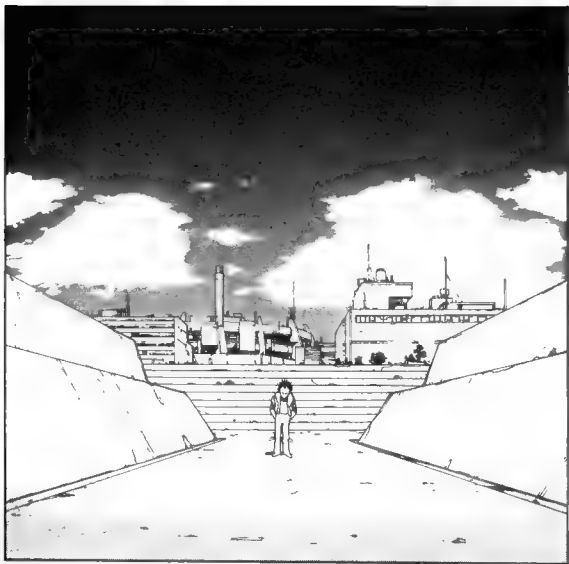


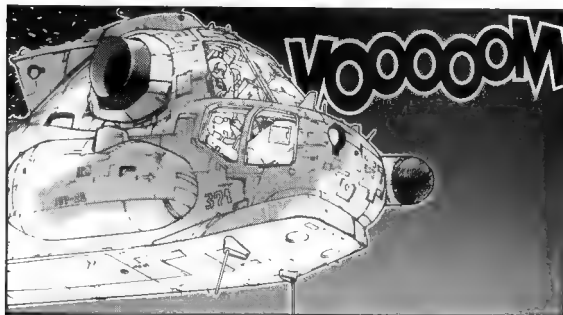


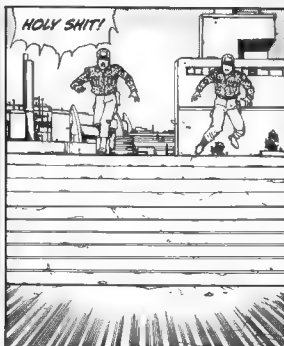
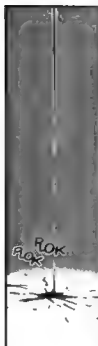
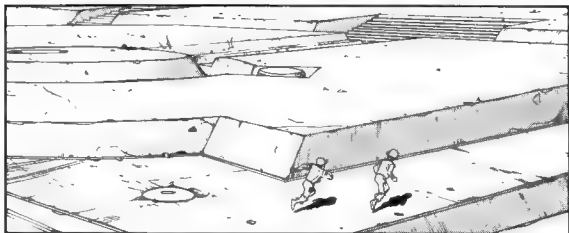


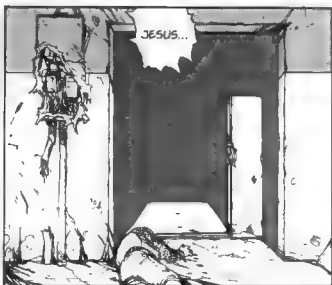
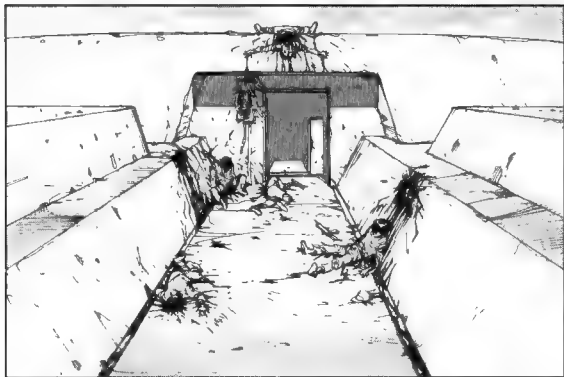


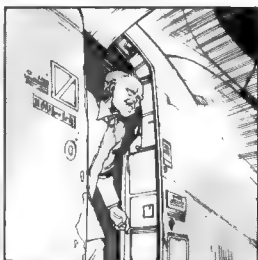
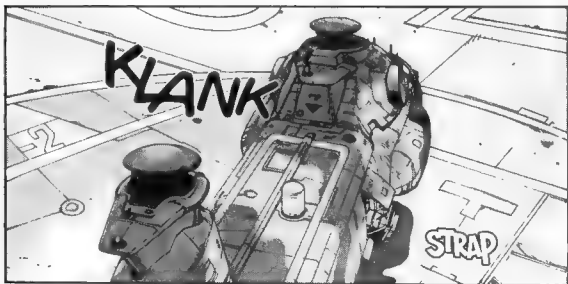


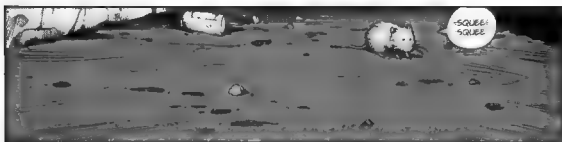


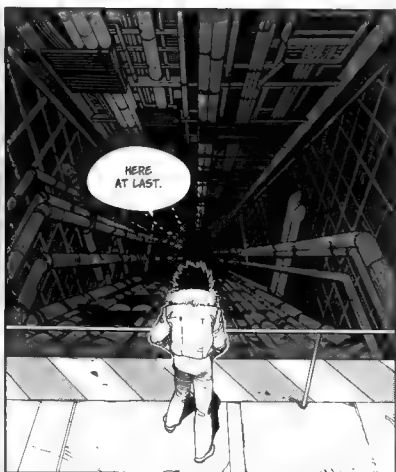
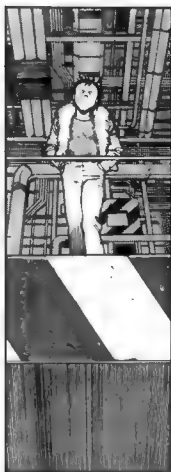
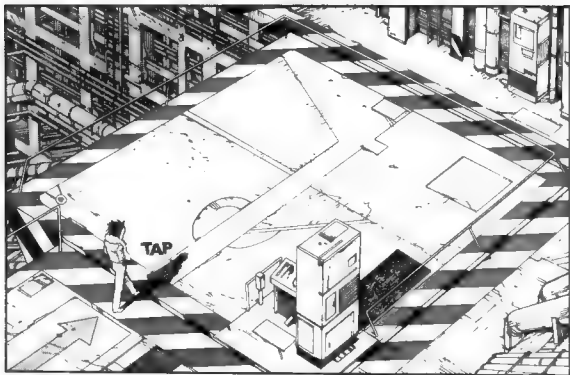


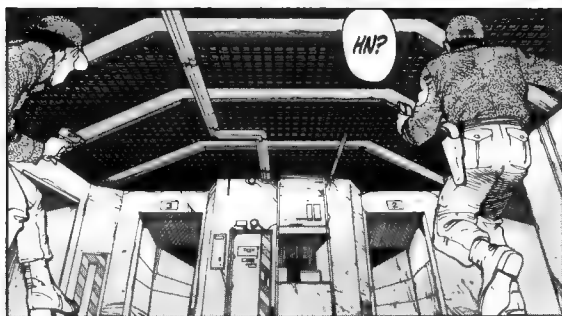


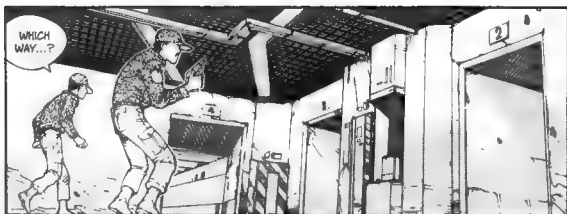


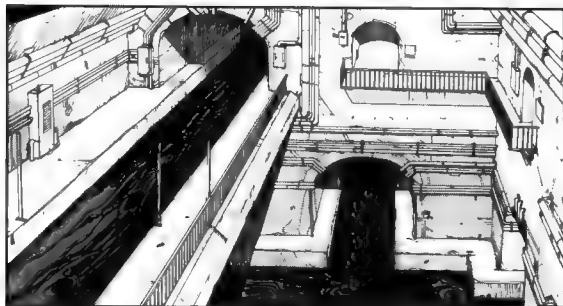


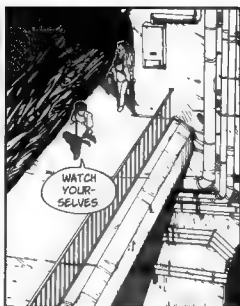


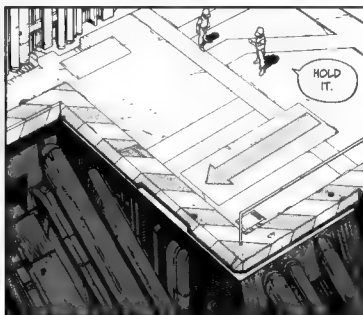
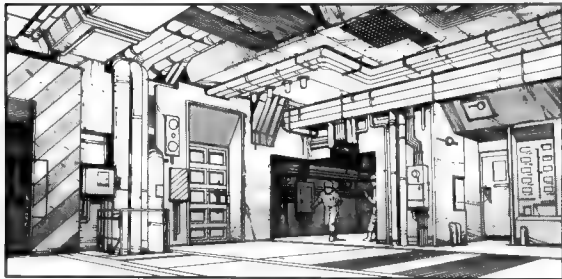


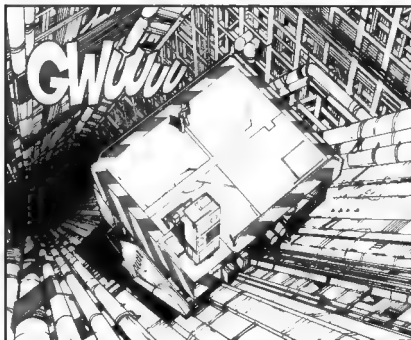
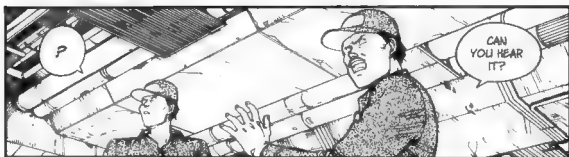




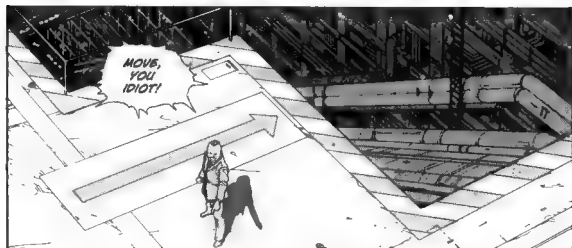


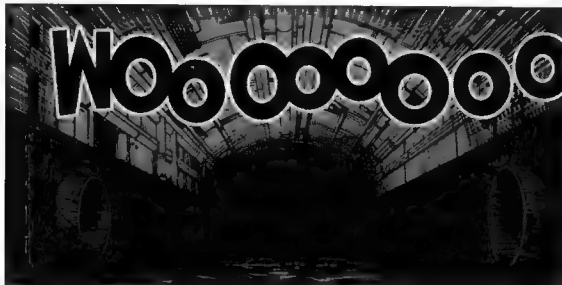


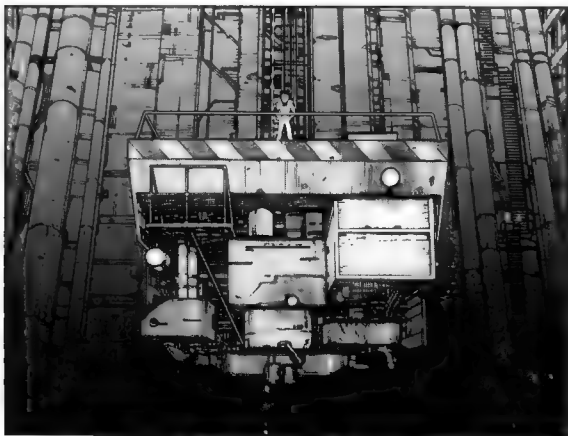
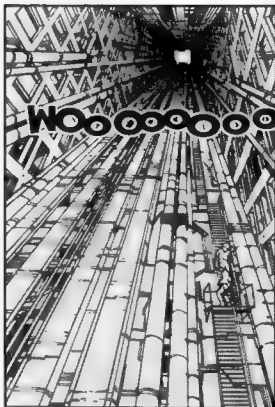


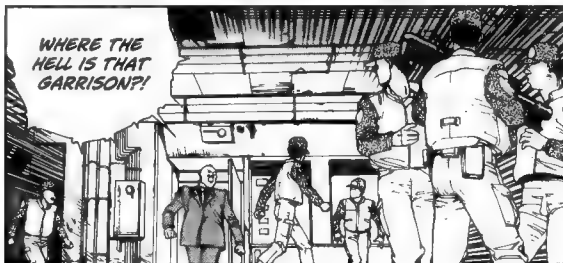
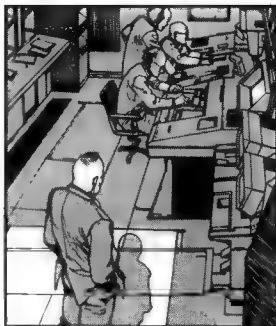


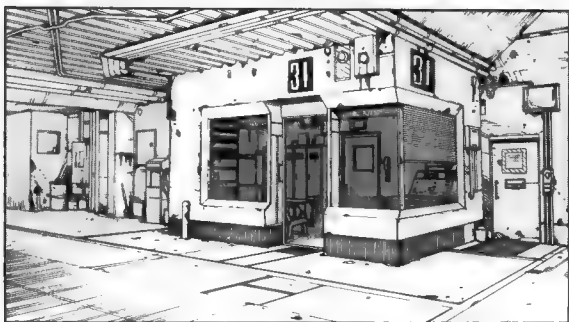
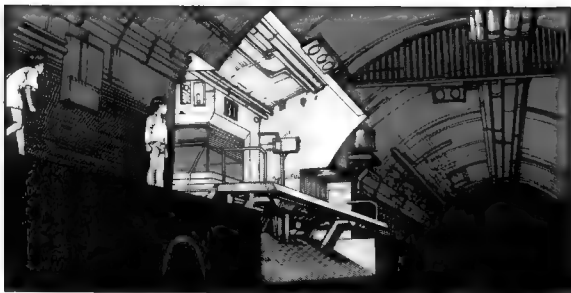


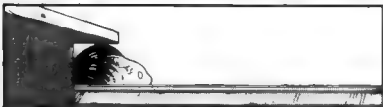
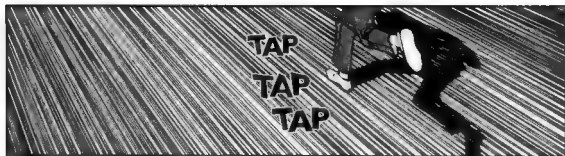






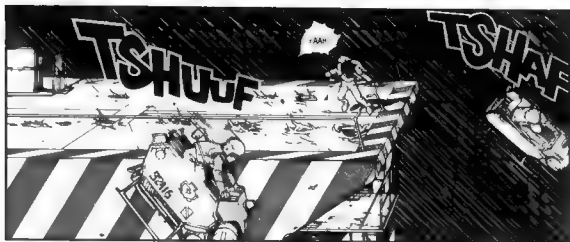




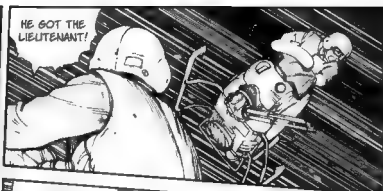


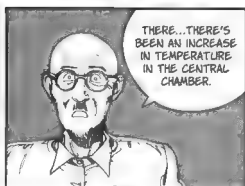
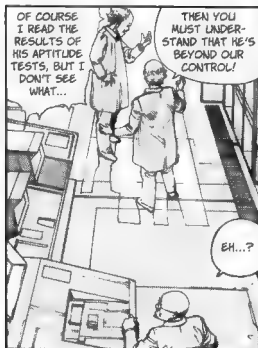


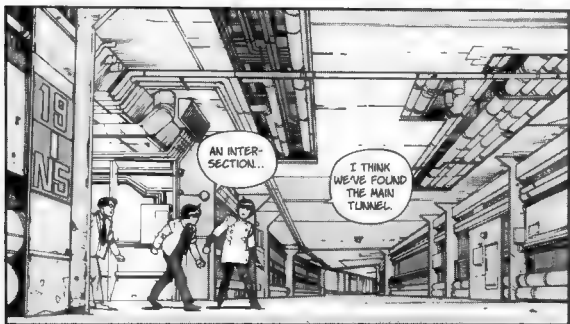
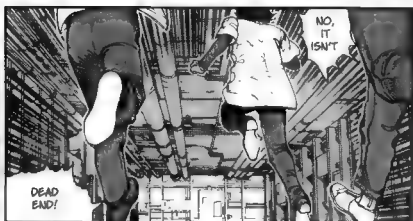
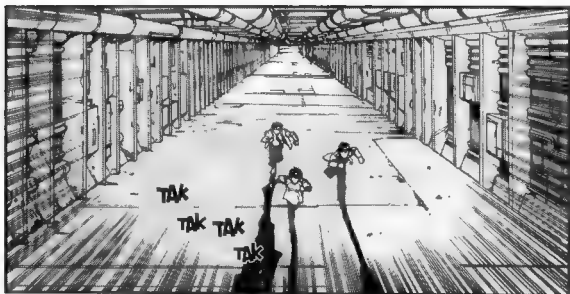


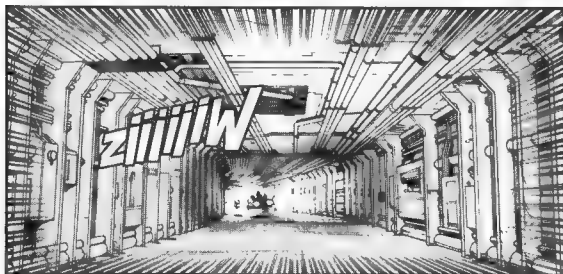


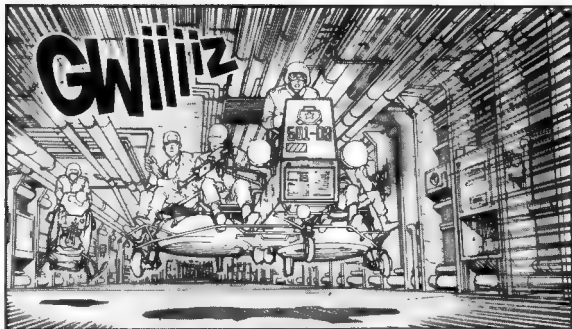


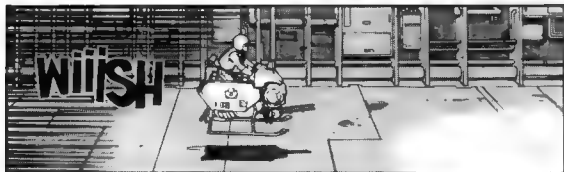


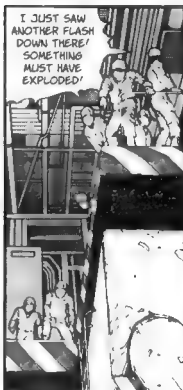
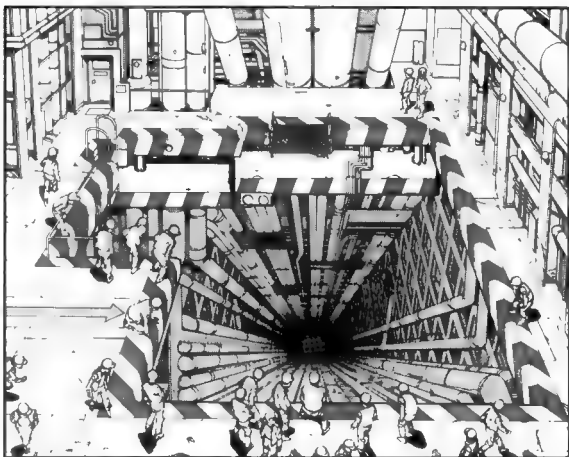












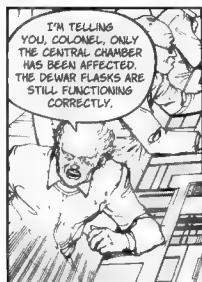
I JUST SAW
ANOTHER FLASH
DOWN THERE!
SOMETHING
MUST HAVE
EXPLODED!



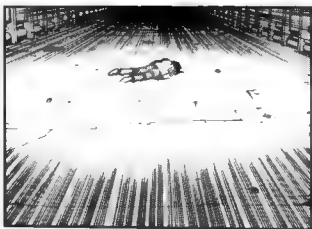
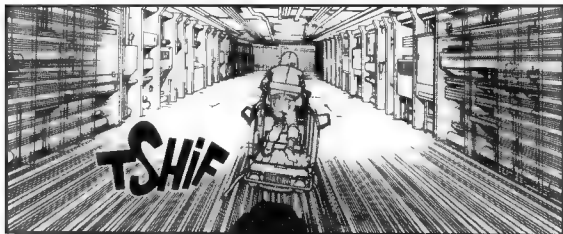
MAIN FORCE
TO FLYING
SQUADRON,
DO YOU
COPY? COME
IN, PLEASE!

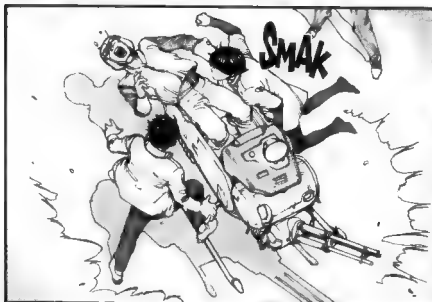
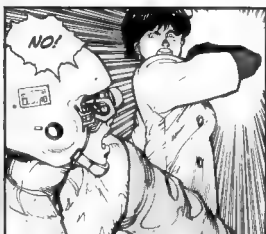


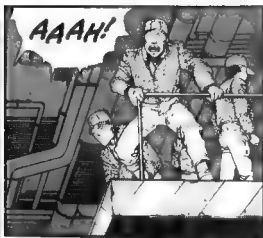
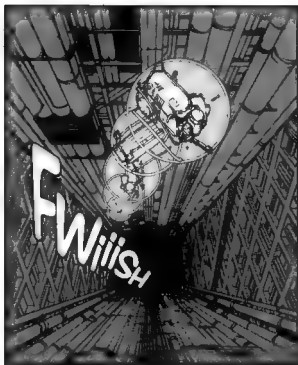
BRAM
BROM

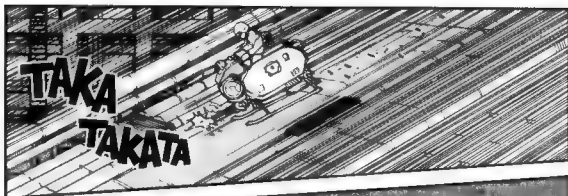




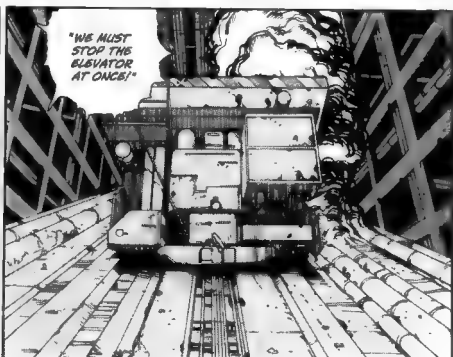
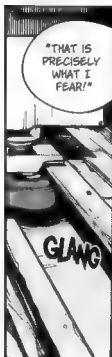


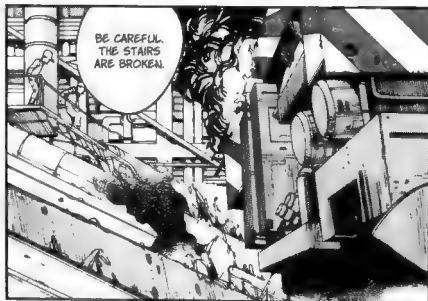


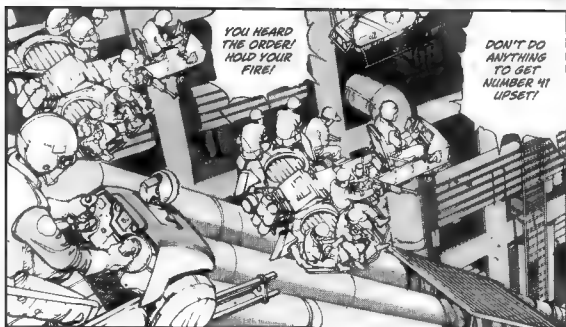
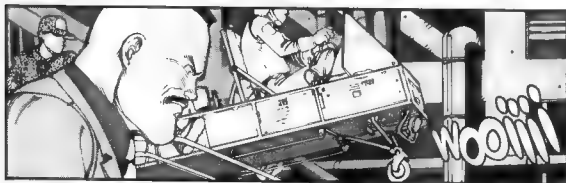


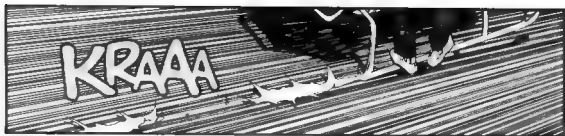


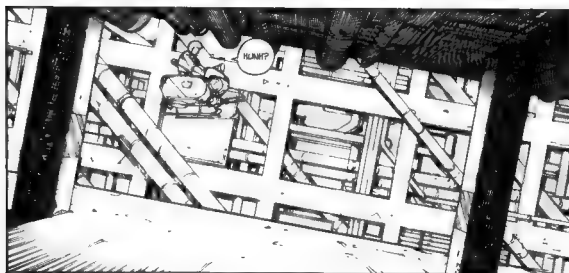
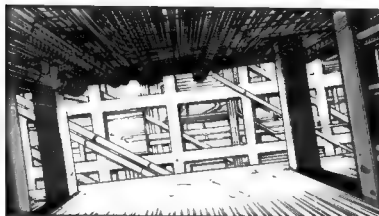


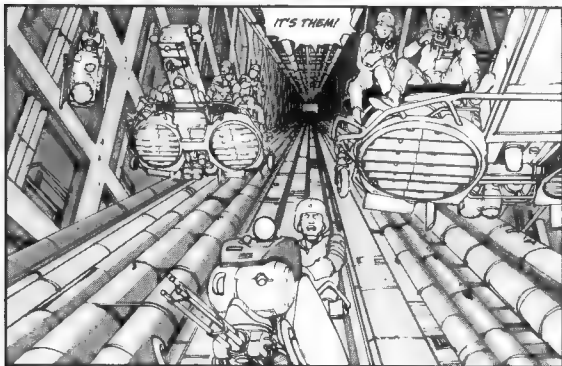
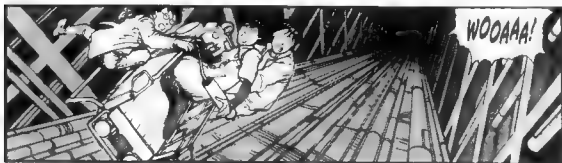
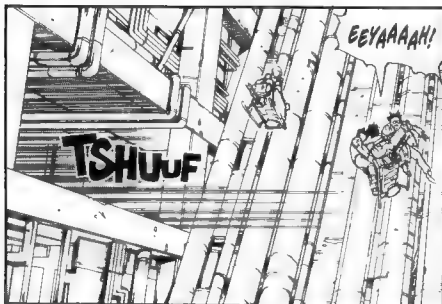


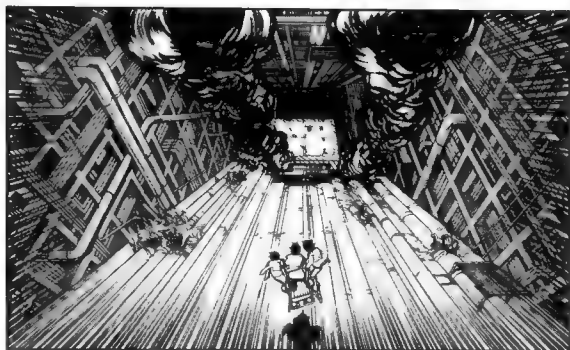


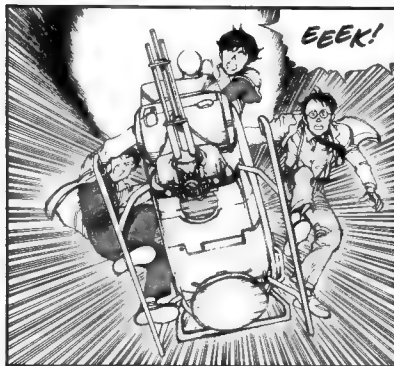
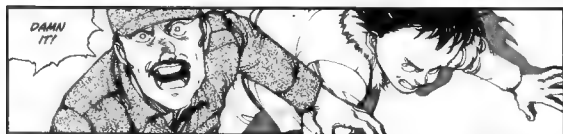




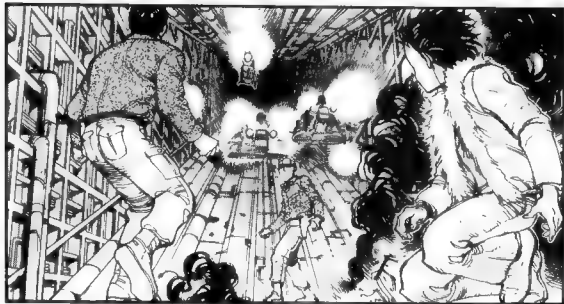
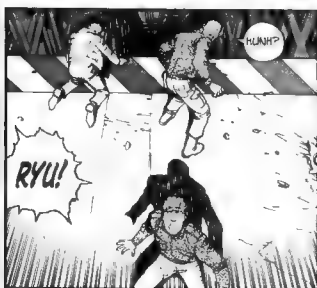


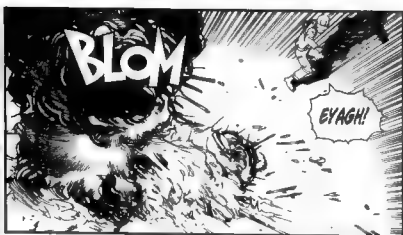
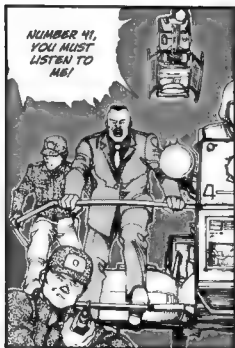


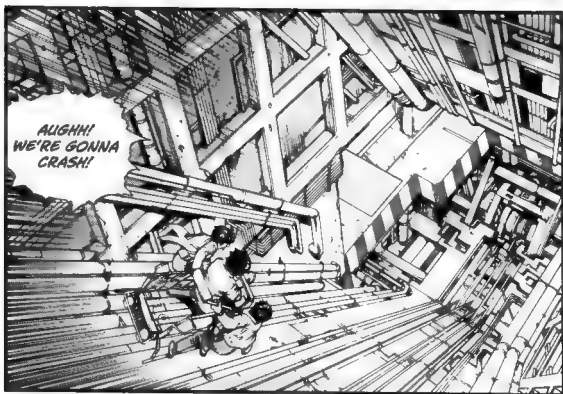


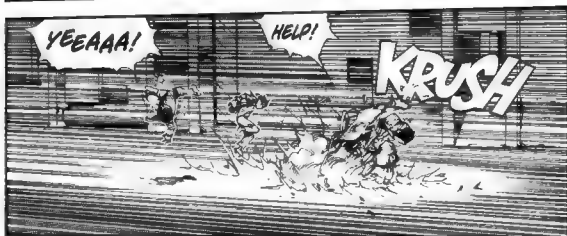
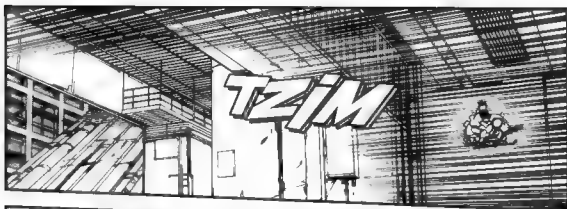






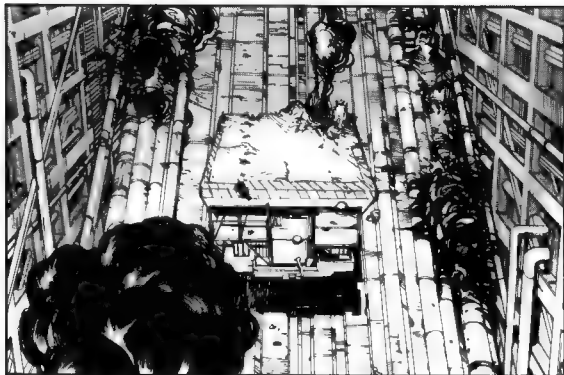


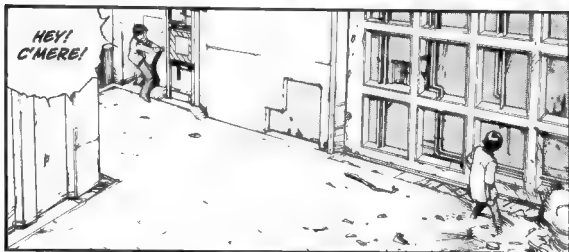


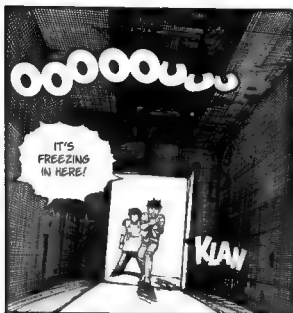


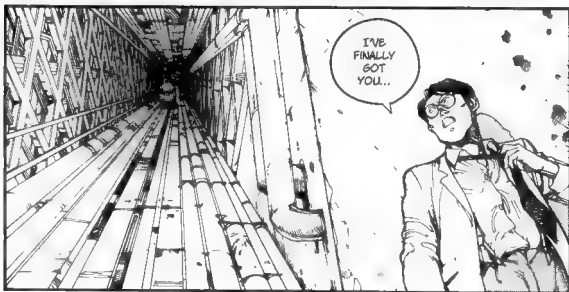
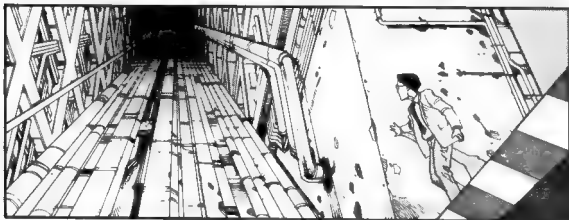
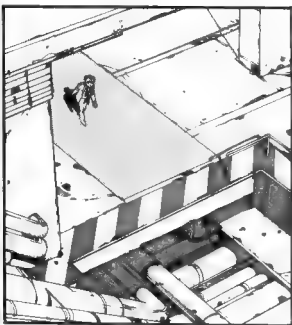
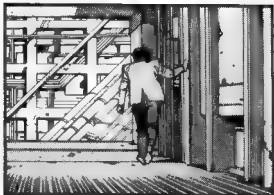


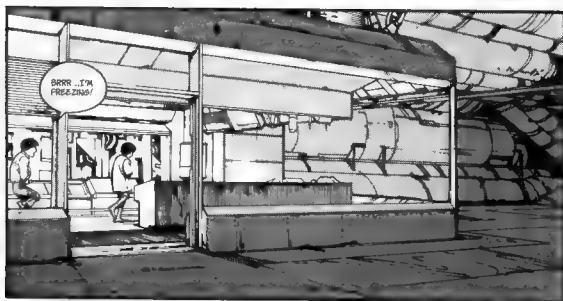










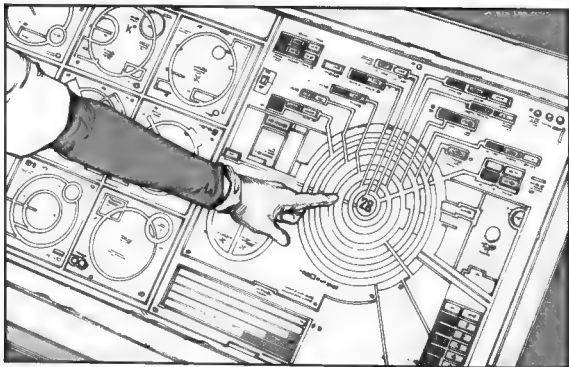




AH?
AAH!!



KANEDA,
LOOK!

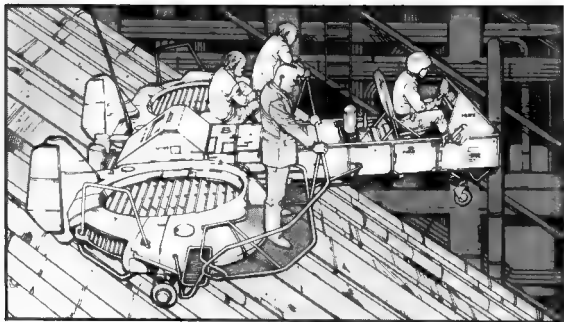


S-SO
WHAT...?

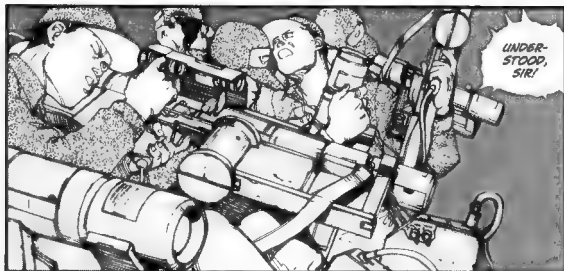
THAT'S
WHERE WE'LL
FIND NUMBER
28!

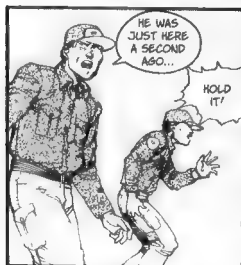


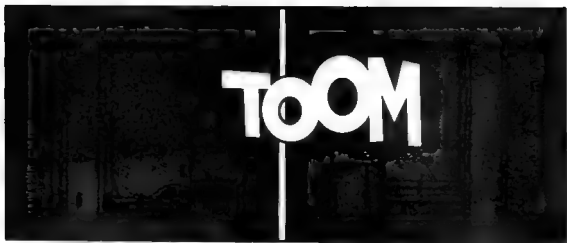


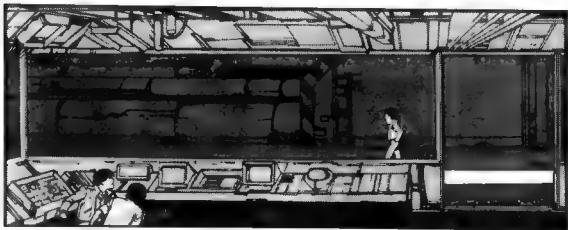
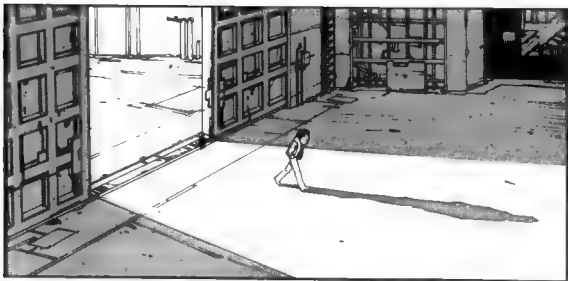


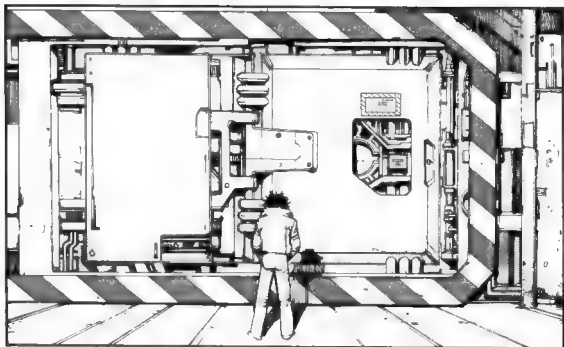
AND IF YOU ARE FORCED TO FIRE...





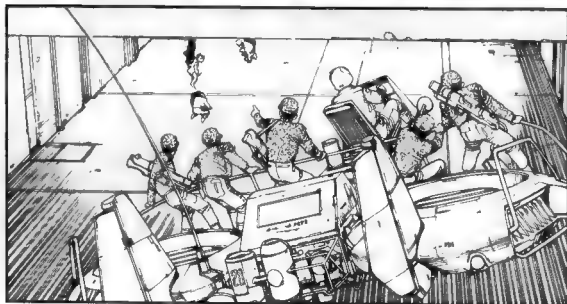
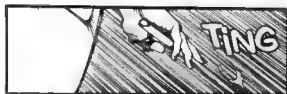


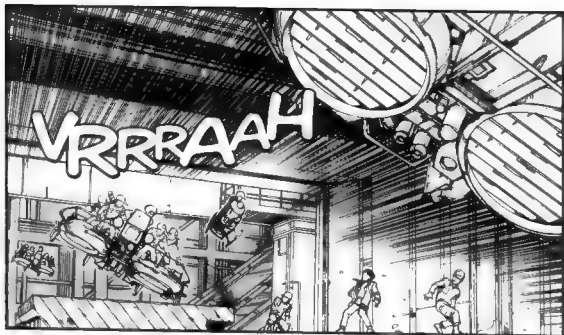


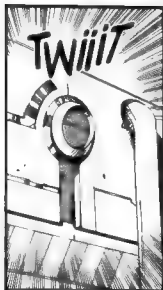


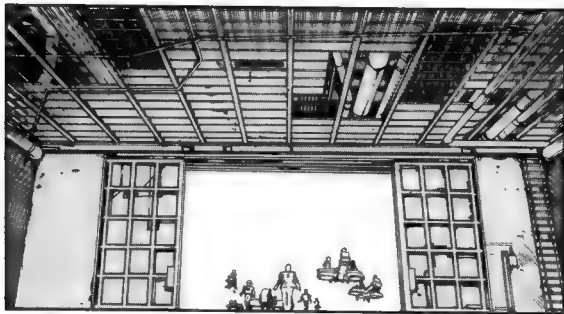


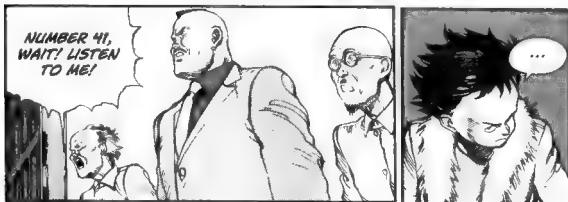


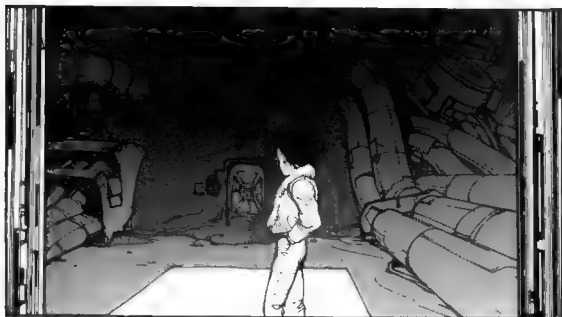


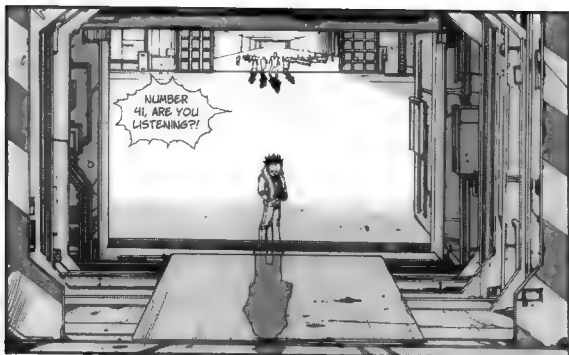


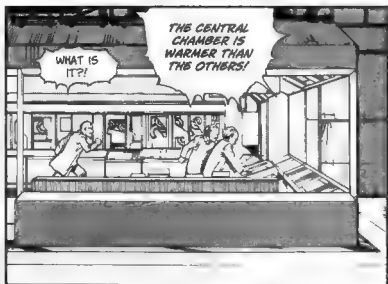
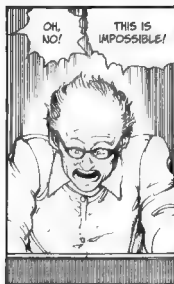
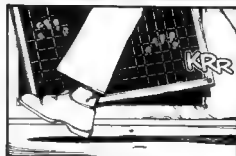
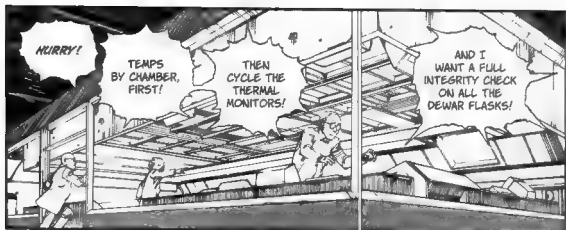


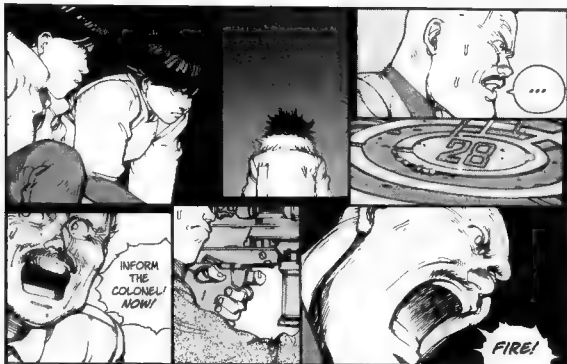
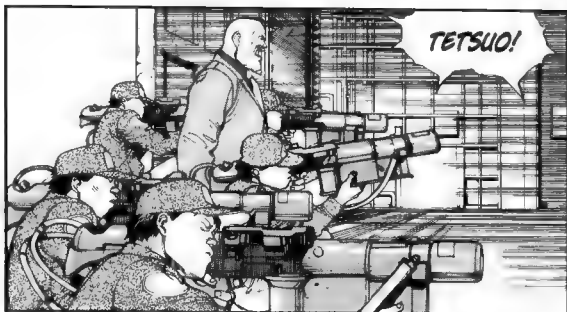




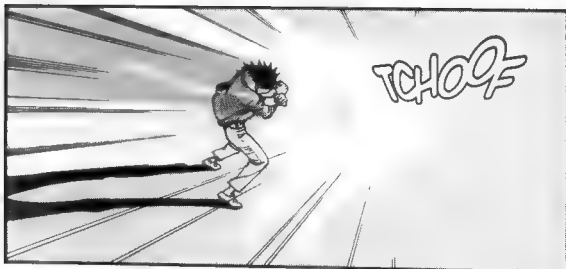


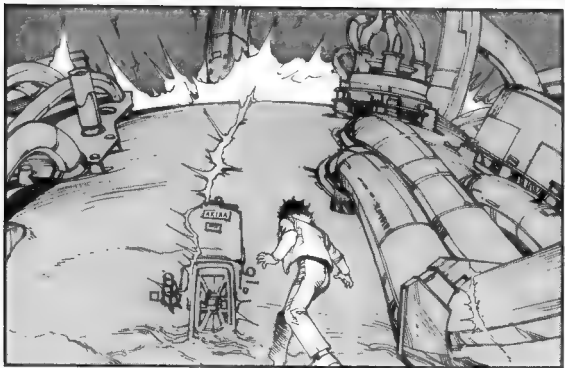
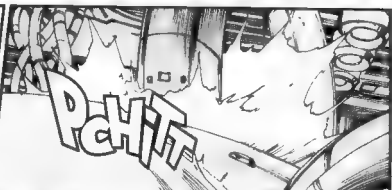
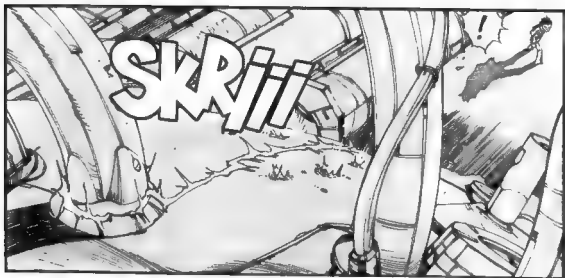


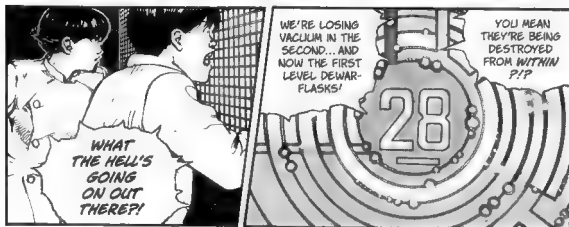
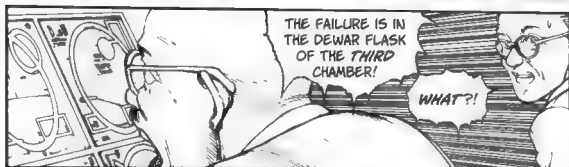
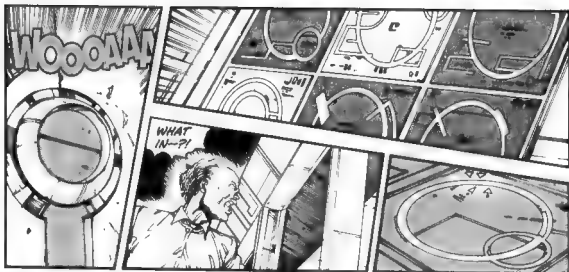


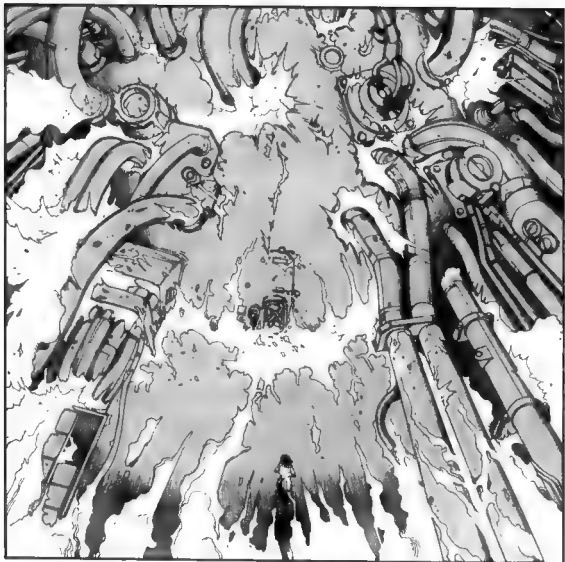




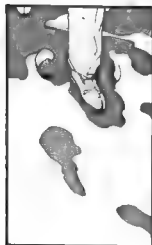
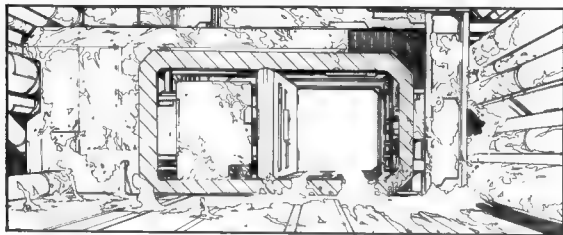






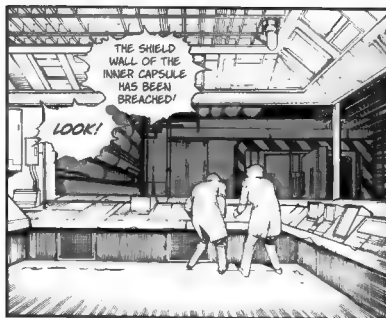


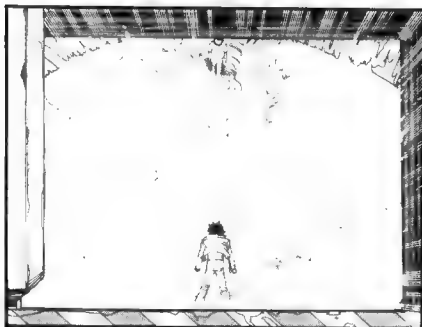




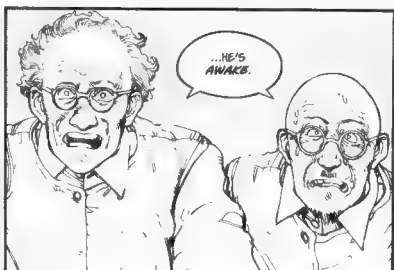


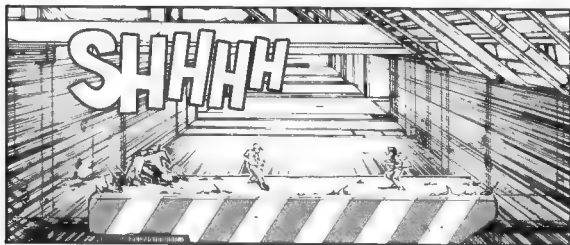




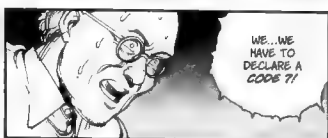
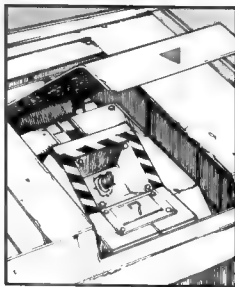
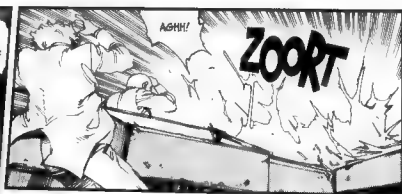


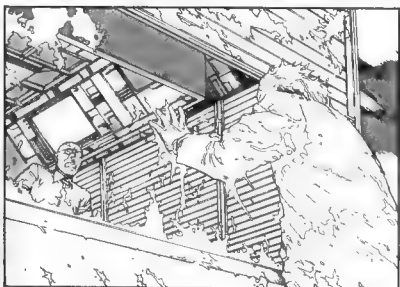






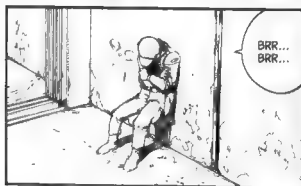




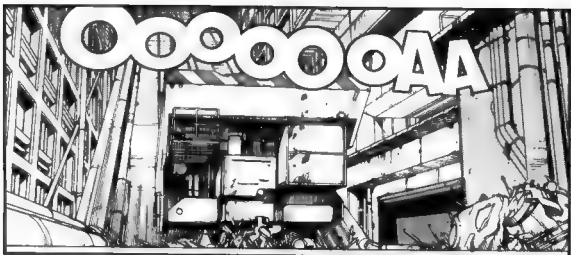








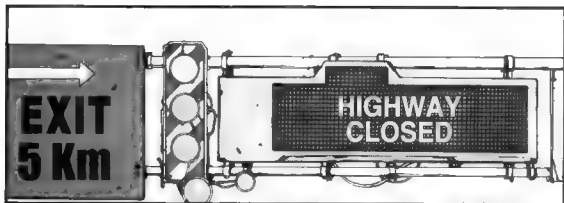




YOU HEAR THAT? A CODE SEVEN ALERT—WHAT-EVER'S UP, THE BRASS RANKS IT AS WORSE THAN A NUCLEAR ATTACK!



BUT I THINK FOR THE MOMENT WE'RE SAFE ENOUGH TO SETTLE WHAT'S BETWEEN US.

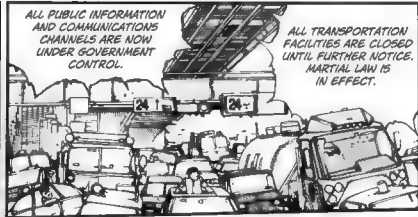
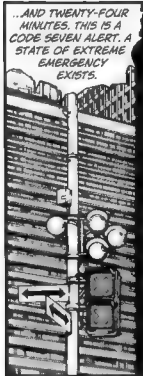




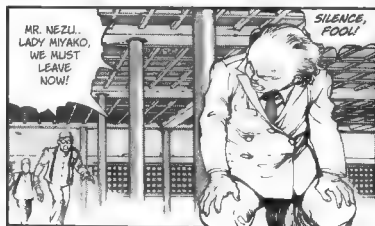
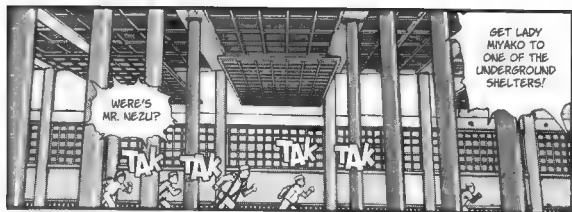
...AND TWENTY-FOUR MINUTES. THIS IS A CODE SEVEN ALERT. A STATE OF EXTREME EMERGENCY EXISTS.

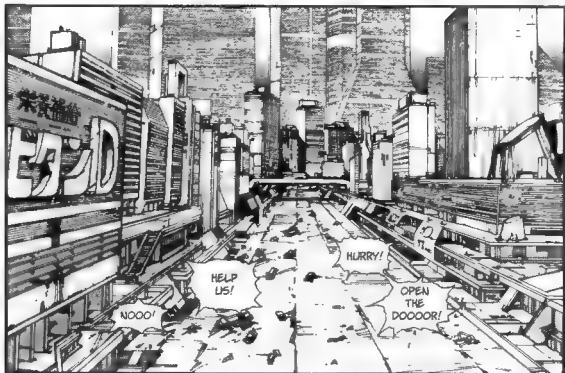
ALL PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS ARE NOW UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL.

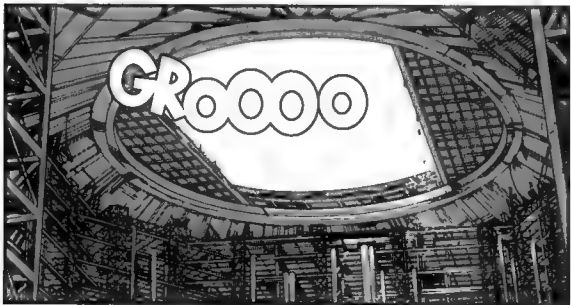
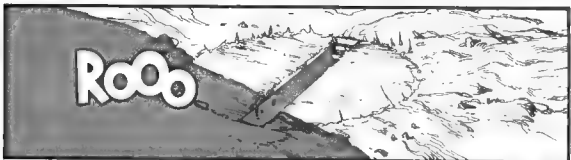
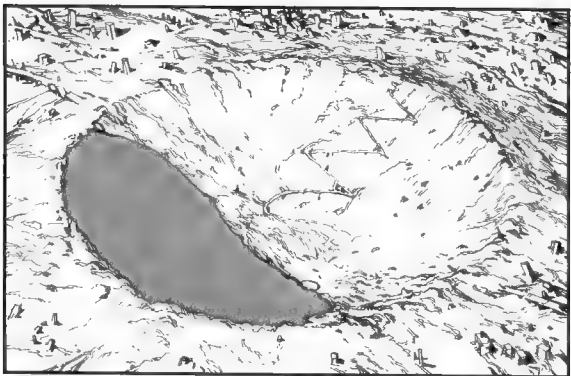
ALL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES ARE CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. MARTIAL LAW IS IN EFFECT.

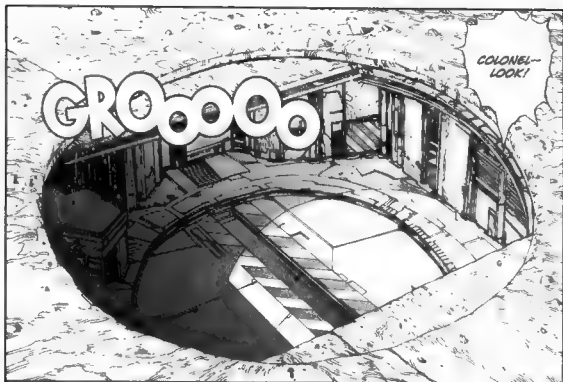


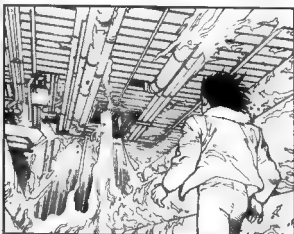
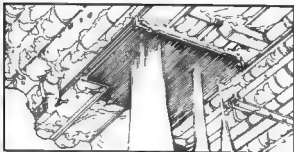
REPORT AT ONCE TO YOUR ASSIGNED EMERGENCY SHELTER. THERE ARE TEN MINUTES REMAINING UNTIL SHELTER DOORS ARE AUTOMATICALLY CLOSED.

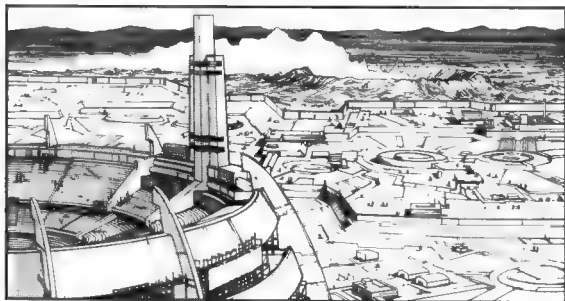
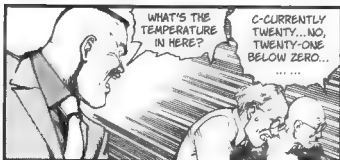


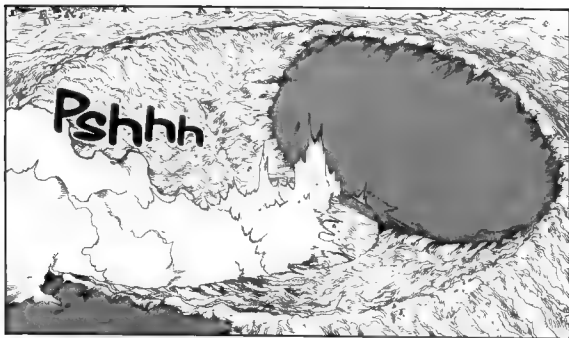


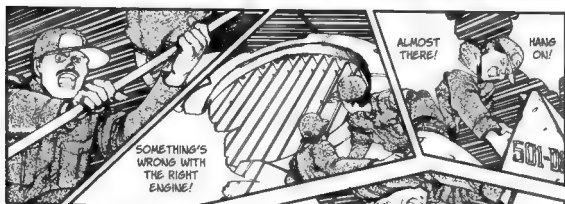
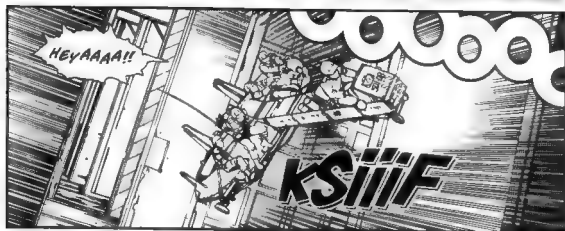


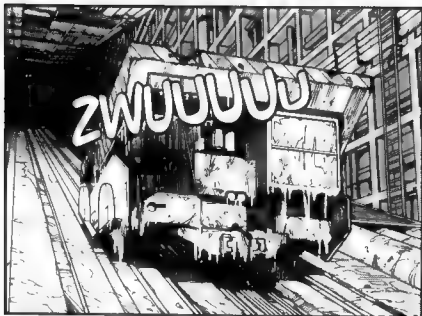


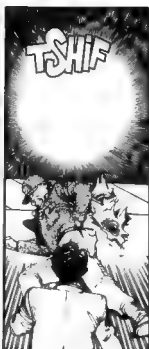
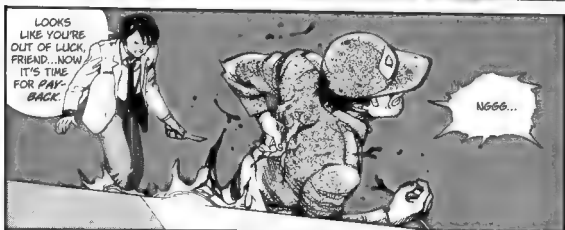


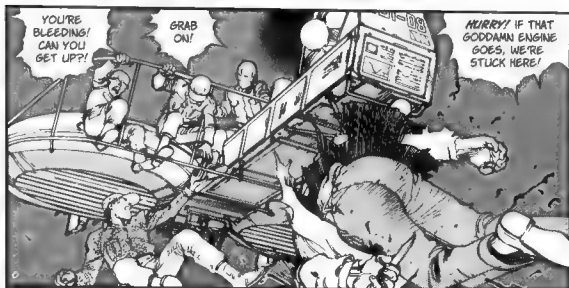
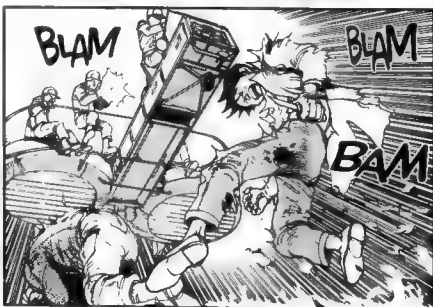


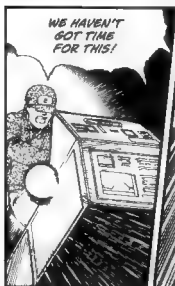


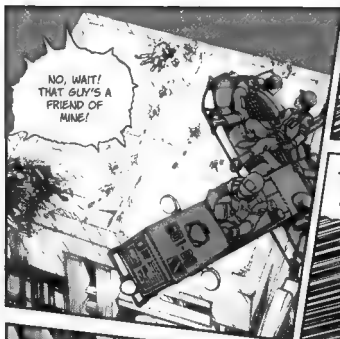


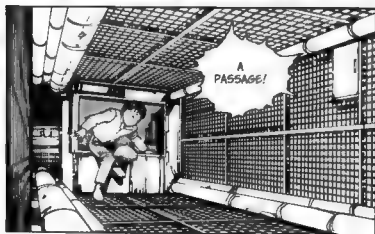


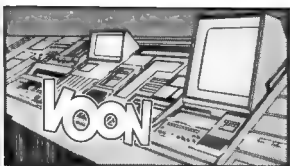




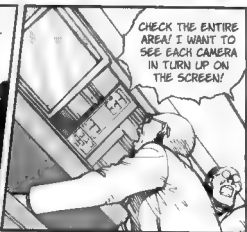


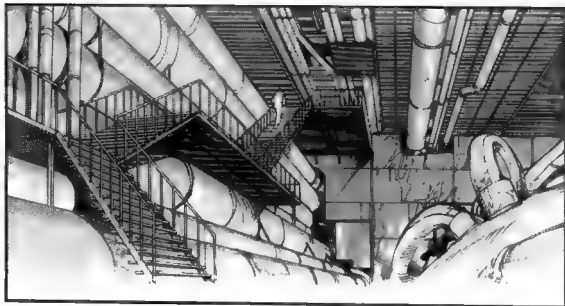




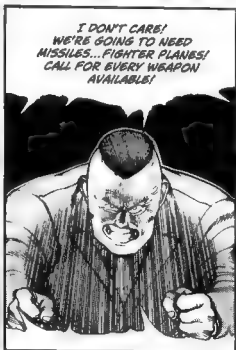
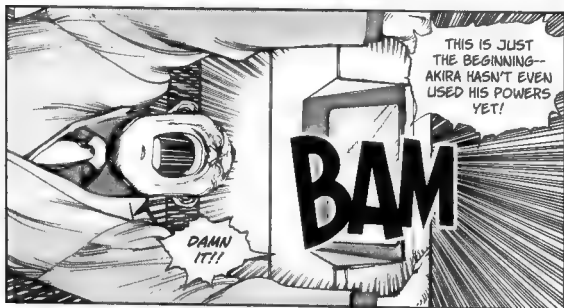


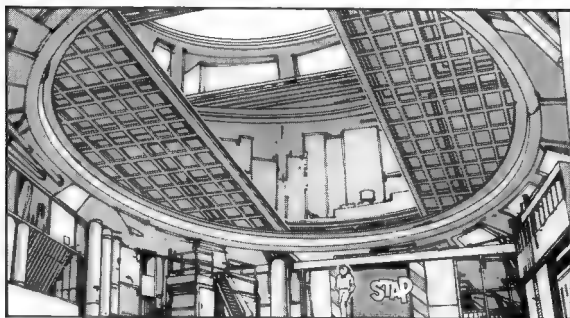
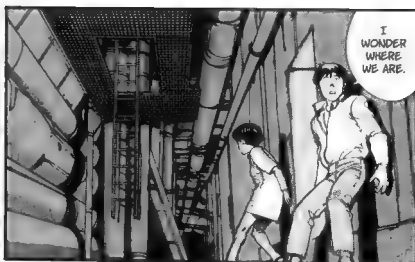
NOW! CHECK THE
MONITORS! I WANT
A REPORT ON THE
WHEREABOUTS
OF NUMBER 41!



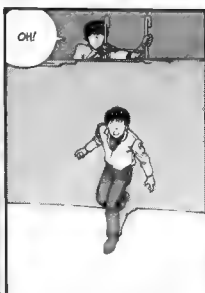


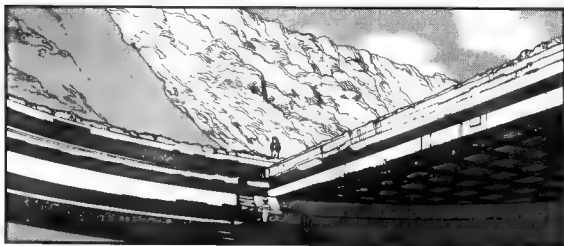




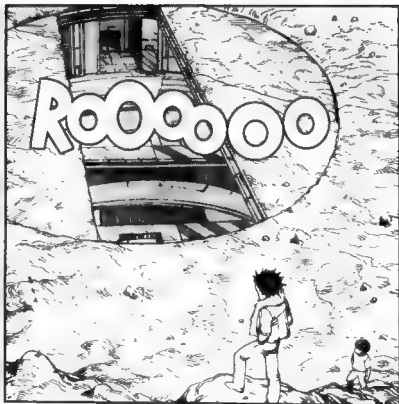


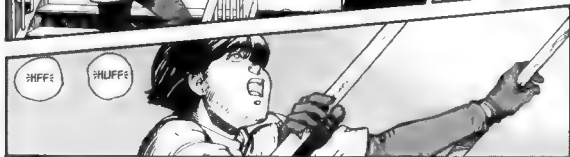
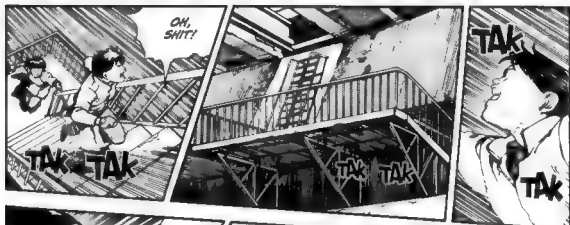
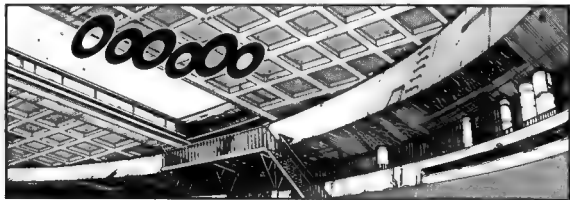








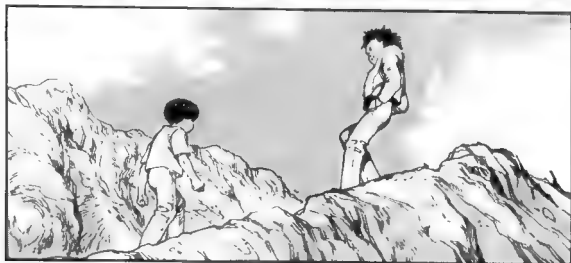
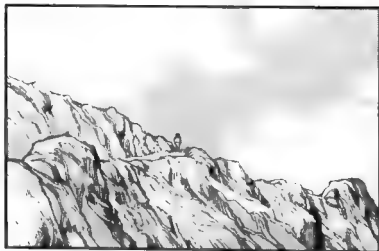


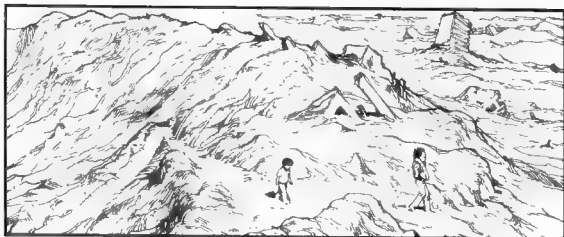


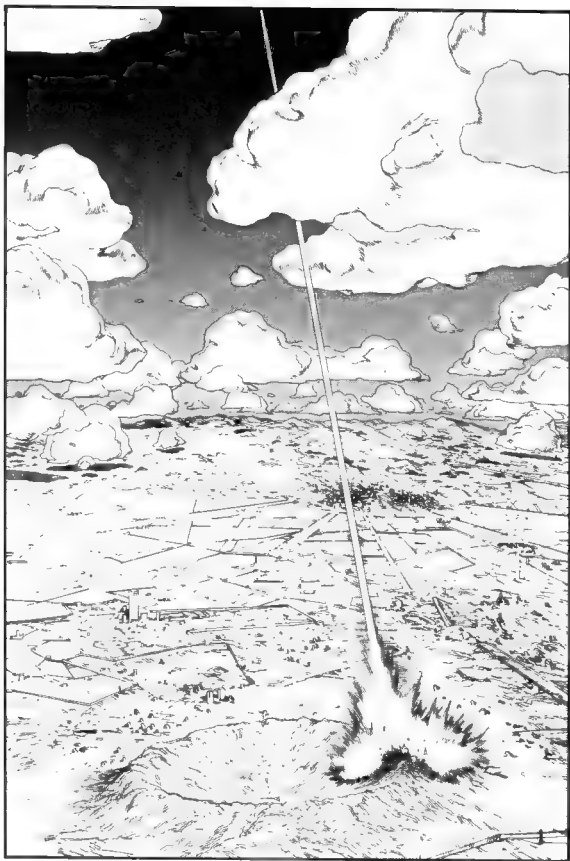


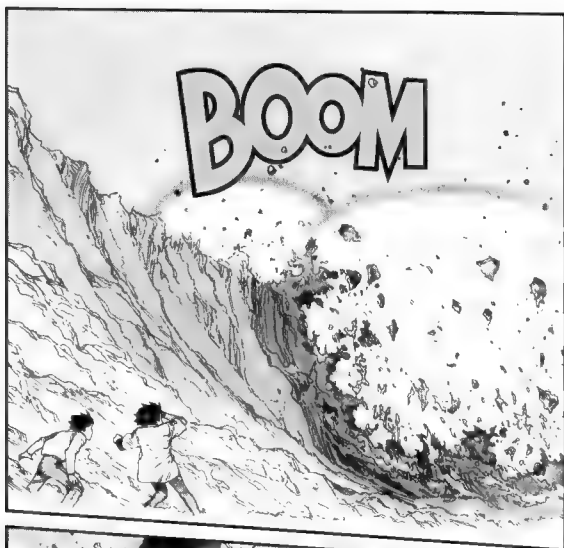


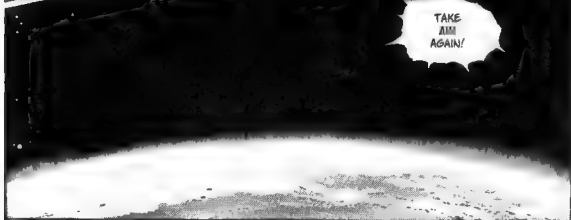


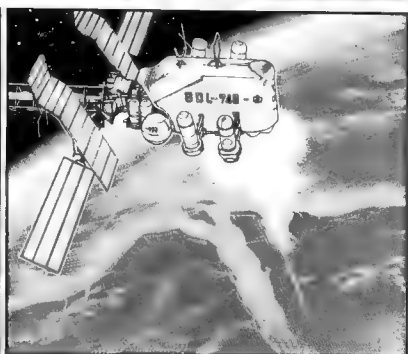
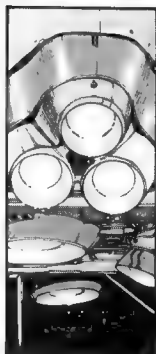
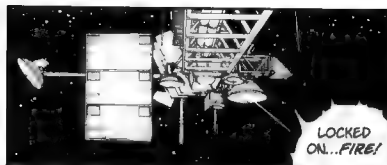
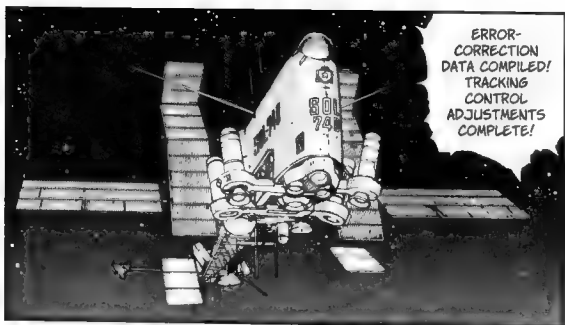




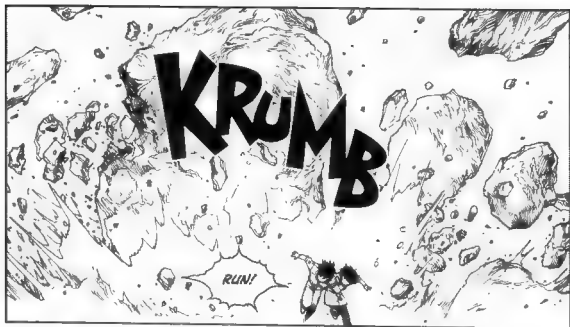




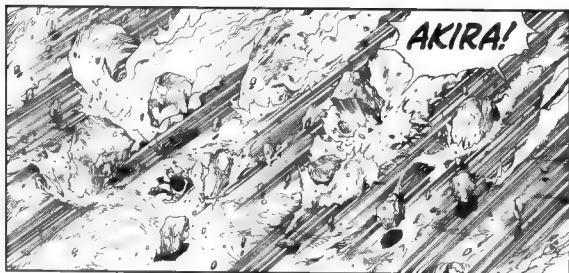




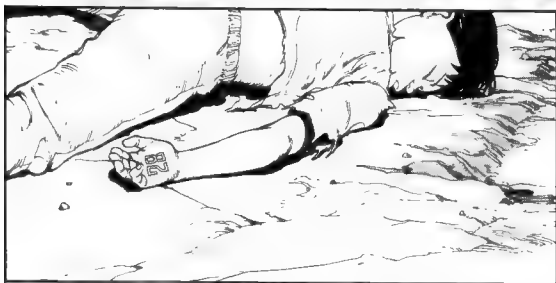


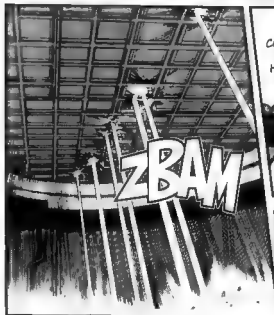
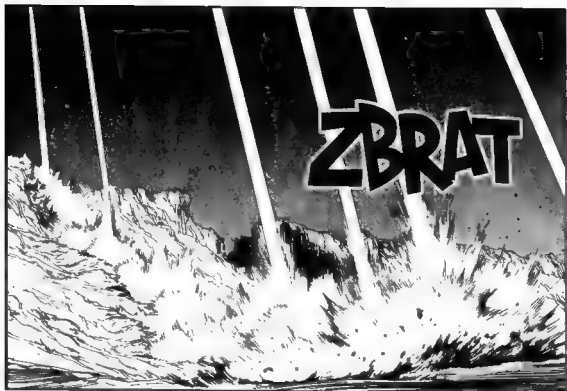


















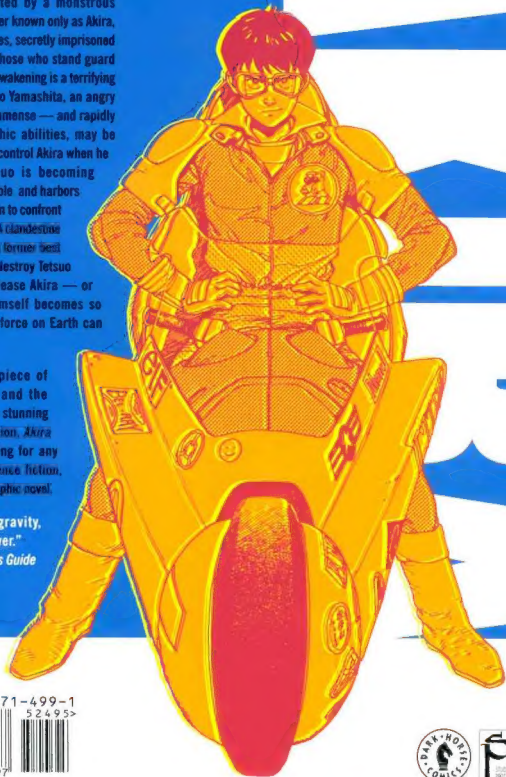
IN THE 21ST CENTURY,

Neo-Tokyo has risen from the ashes of a Tokyo obliterated by a monstrous psychokinetic power known only as Akira, a being who yet lives, secretly imprisoned in frozen stasis. Those who stand guard know that Akira's awakening is a terrifying inevitability. Tetsuo Yamashita, an angry young man with immense — and rapidly growing — psychic abilities, may be their only hope to control Akira when he wakes. But Tetsuo is becoming increasingly unstable and harbors a growing obsession to confront Akira face-to-face. A clandestine group including his former best friend sets out to destroy Tetsuo before he can release Akira — or before Tetsuo himself becomes so powerful that no force on Earth can stop him!

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